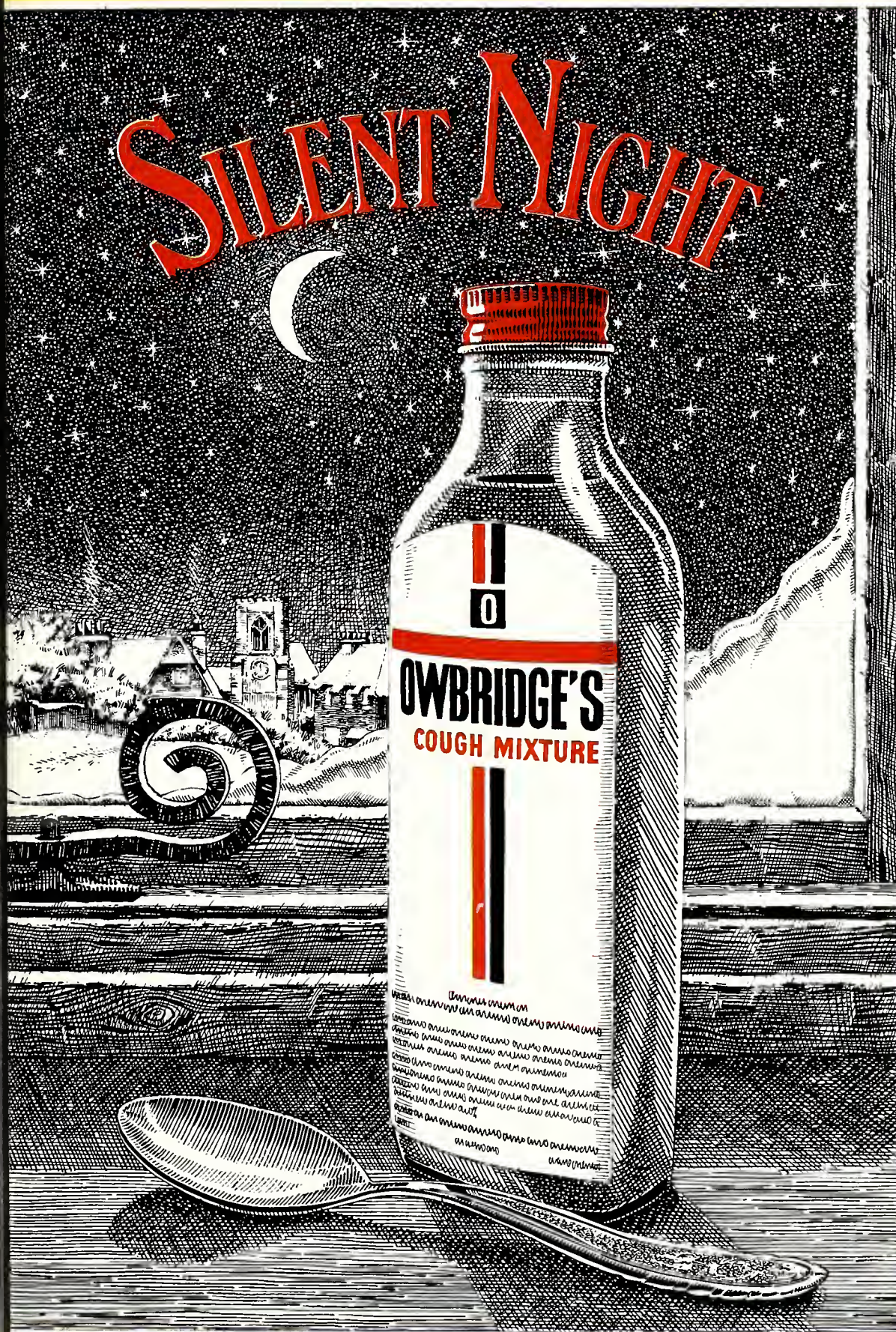


CHEMIST & DRUGGIST

INCORPORATING RETAIL CHEMIST



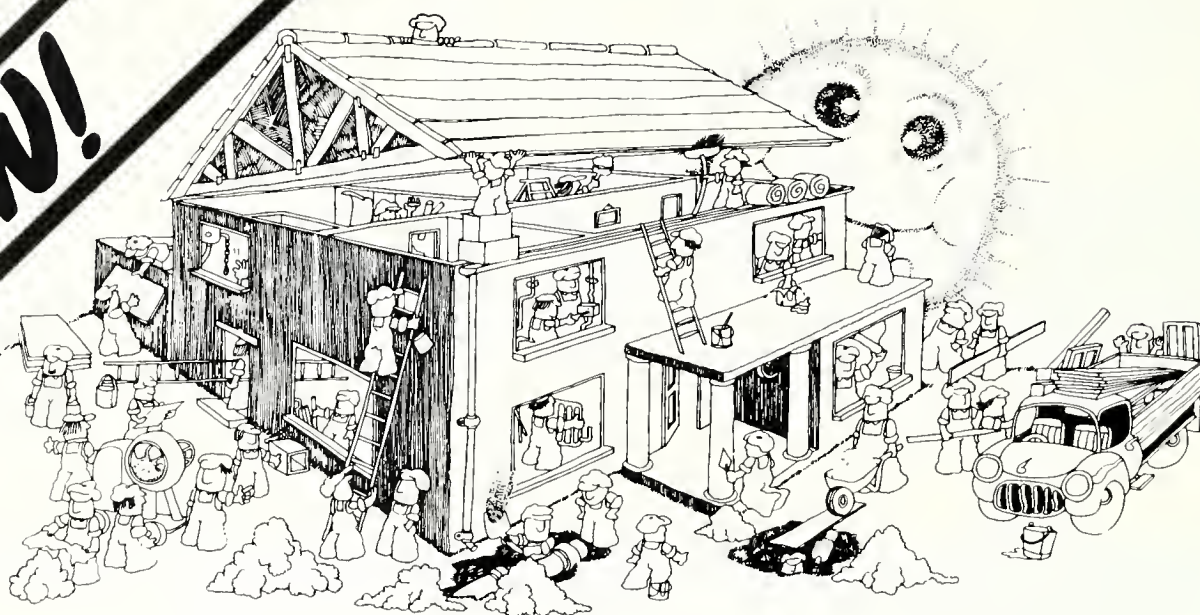
Shopfitting

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

Department
suggests terms
of reference
for panel

JIC fails to
agree on new
wage scales

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December 23/30 1978

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23/30 December 1978

COMMENT

Resolutions

General practice pharmacy is stepping into 1979 with its future, or its fate, very much in others' hands—from a Royal Commission to consumer groups. The most influential in determining the shape of things to come will of course be the independent panel being set up to "assess" the NHS contractors' profit margin, which has been in dispute for over two years.

The Department of Health's proposed terms of reference for the panel have been announced this week (p1000) and these may or may not prove acceptable to the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee—remembering that chairman David Sharpe told the recent LPC representatives conference that "platitudinous" widening beyond the profit margin issue would not be acceptable to the committee. Certainly as framed the proposals would seem to offer the panel wide scope for investigation and recommendation since it must consider the "general criteria" which should determine profit payable for the provision of pharmaceutical services.

The panel is being guided to direct its attention primarily to the rate of profit and the method of its calculation. These are specific points of dispute but contractors who are not negotiators or accountants may wonder whether the panel can contribute much to their future wellbeing without taking broader issues into account. Perhaps the best hope is that the panel will limit the scope of its study in the interest of a speedy decision but still have the vision to chart a new direction for future negotiations.

Among the doubters of the panel's prospects may be the current losers under the global sum system of payment: they would be cheered more in the New Year by rapid progress on a new contract rather than by the prospect of an enlarged "pool" which remains unfairly allocated among the providers of the service. For any improvement in this direction, however, they will probably have to await the recommendations of yet another arbiter, this time on the question of rational location of pharmacies; regrettably the profession has been unable to resolve its differences with the company chemists and has asked that the parties be brought together by the Department (which is hardly disinterested, one might think).

Resale price maintenance on "ethicals" is another area in which the GP pharmacist is largely dependent upon the actions of others. Unfortunately, the new terms which many major manufacturers are seeking to impose on wholesalers do not yet seem to have stopped the slide towards competition on price instead of service. Unless the new terms are made to bite soon, the industry's last-ditch effort will fail. But if 1978 has seen little safely under the profession's belt, the year's main achievement must surely be the degree of unity which has helped to enlist the support of public and politicians. The first New Year resolution for every single member of the profession should be to ensure that the momentum is not lost and that the effort does not go to waste.



Season's Greetings

C&D wishes all subscribers, advertisers and contributors a Merry Christmas followed by a healthy, happy and prosperous New Year.



Chemist & Druggist 999

Department gives panel's terms of reference

The Department of Health has written to the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee suggesting terms of reference for the independent panel which is to consider pharmacists' remuneration.

The terms include investigation of "the general criteria which should determine the profit payable to chemist contractors" and also whether the profit should be calculated on some basis other than capital employed.

A letter from the Department to PSNC reads: "The broader terms of reference you suggested are acceptable to us except the reference to dates of implementation.

"The Secretary of State acknowledges that the panel might wish to take into account movements in drug prices since the committee's claim was submitted and he has indicated that he would carefully consider any advice it might offer but he does not think it right to make the date of implementation part of the formal terms of reference.

"He also thinks that it would be advisable to extend the terms of reference to draw the panel's attention more specifically to the central matter in dispute. Accordingly we would suggest that the following terms of reference should be put to the panel: 'To consider

the general criteria which should determine the profit payable to chemist contractors for the provision of Part II pharmaceutical services under the NHS Act 1977 and in particular consider—

1. Whether the present rate of return on capital employed in NHS dispensing is appropriate and, if not, suggest what it should be.

2. Whether the profit should be determined on some basis other than capital employed, and to make recommendations.'

"We recognise that the committee may wish to raise certain matters relating to operating costs and if need be these could be specified in the letter."

PSNC is to meet on January 4, 1979, to discuss both these terms of reference and membership of the panel. Mr Alan Smith, chief executive, told *C&D* he was pleased that the terms had been expanded to "profit payable" as it would take into account other issues such as overheads.

Rational location plans submitted

The Pharmaceutical Society and Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee have now written jointly to Mr Roland

Moyle, Minister for Health, submitting proposals for the rational location of pharmaceutical services (*C&D*, June 10, 1961).

The accompanying letter, dated December 12, points out that the Company Chemists Association and the Co-operative Pharmacy Technical Panel still have reservations about some of the proposals: "The Council felt that you might wish to convene a meeting of representatives of the bodies concerned to discuss the remaining points of difference within the profession."

The letter continues: "During the discussions which have taken place over the last 12 months, the Society and the PSNC have also agreed that it would be useful to include in the arrangements a national practices committee which could adjudicate on multiple applications and act generally as an appeals body."

Finally, the letter mentions that the conference of Local Pharmaceutical Committee representatives on November 26 passed resolutions calling for a rational distribution of doctors' surgeries and compensation for lost prescriptions when surgeries closed.

Broad principles of VAT 'remain sound'

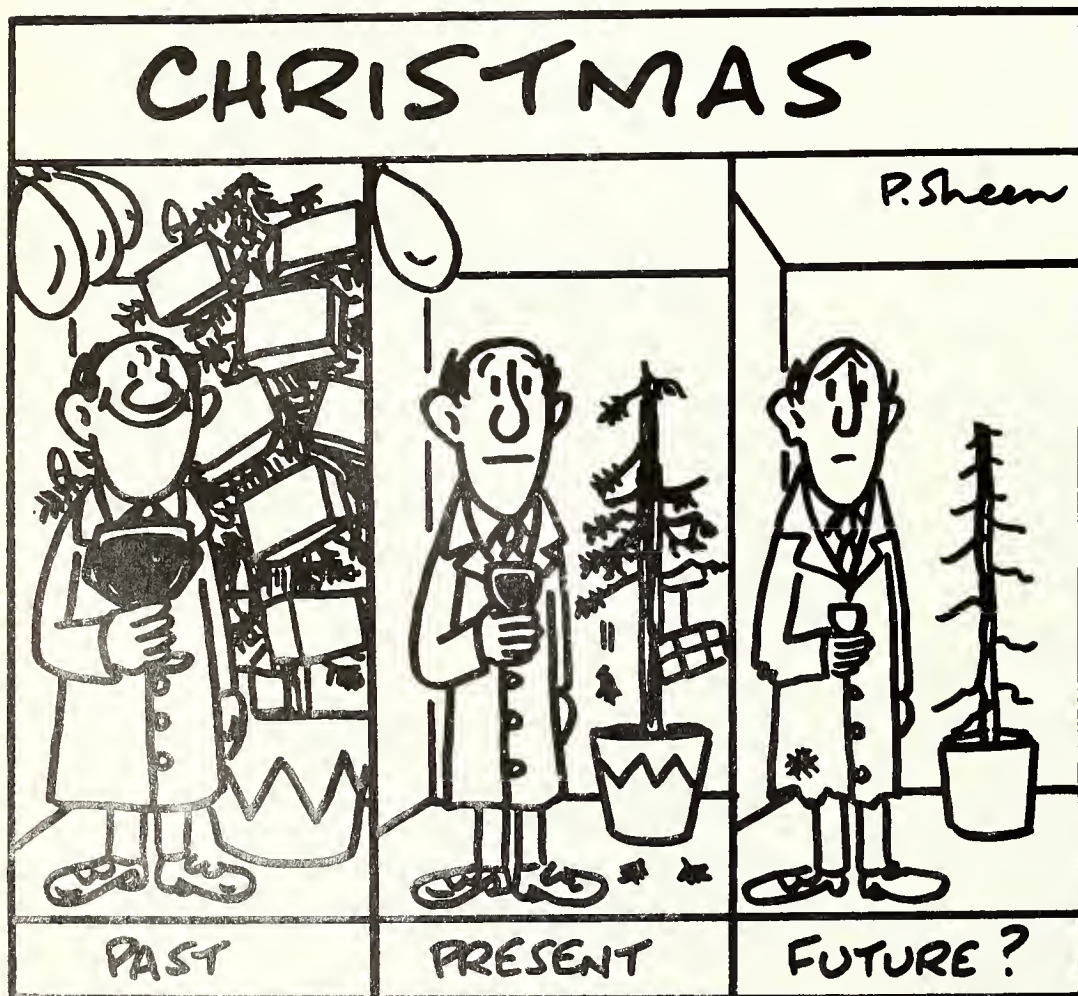
The broad principles on which the operation and administration of Value Added Tax are based, remain sound for the immediate future, say the Commissioners of Customs and Excise in their Review of VAT (Cmnd 7415, £0.50, HM Stationery Office).

The review follows a recommendation from the House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, and comments from trade associations and other interested bodies. The first part of the review concentrated on changes to simplify the tax operation and proposals were announced in the 1978 Budget debates and subsequently implemented. The second part sought to identify ways to improve internal operations.

The report reveals that during 1977-78 the cost of administering VAT was 2p for every £1 net collected. Net receipts were £4,235 million and costs were £85m.

The commissioners looked at repayment traders as a source of saving. Such traders normally claim their repayments monthly (rather than the usual quarterly) and represent a high proportion of voluntary registrations. About 70,000 claims are regularly received for repayments of less than £100. Raising the threshold below which repayments are not made (at present £1) was considered but regarded as not effective. Reducing the frequency of claims for traders whose repayments are normally small was thought an alternative, although the report recognises such action could be at some cost to small traders.

The reviewers say that some efforts to simplify the tax are misunderstood. For example, the nine different schemes of accounting are intended to allow a choice to suit particular circumstances.



JIC fails to agree on new wage scales

The National Joint Industrial Council for Retail Pharmacy has failed to agree on new rates for wages and holidays. At this month's meeting, the trade union side argued that JIC agreements were out of date by comparison with other workers.

The trade union side secretary submitted statistical documents in support of the contention and asked the employers' side to study them. He wants to negotiate "substantial improvements" for all categories of staff covered by the agreements. A council meeting has been scheduled for the "earliest practicable moment" to discuss the documents.

Boots factory workers get 16 pc pay rise

The Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers' claim that 6,000 members employed in Boots factories and warehouses throughout Britain were underpaid—largely because of the anomalies of Government pay policies—has been upheld by the Central Arbitration Committee.

The award, announced on Monday, means a pay rise of about 16 per cent backdated to the beginning of the year and will cost the company £2.5 million in a full year. Boots retail staff will be receiving a 5 per cent increase from January 1, 1979. This will be examined again in the new year in the light of government policy.

The union agreed that the rigidities produced by successive pay policies, coupled with an old job evaluation scheme, had brought about a situation in which the Boots factory and warehouse workers were getting an average of about

£10 a week less than the rates secured by the union in other pharmaceutical companies.

Boots co-operated with the union in providing information for the CAC, which was asked to rule that the situation was "unfair" to Boots employees under the terms of Parliament's "Fair Wages Resolution 1946". Meanwhile, both union and company agreed to a new job evaluation scheme which brings the grading structure up to date.

The award has been made on the basis of the new grading structure and will bring increases of £7.10 a week to those on the lowest grade, rising to increases of £15.50 for those on the highest. There are, as a consequence, spin-off effects on future wages as far as overtime and premium payments are concerned.

A meeting of the trade union joint national committee will shortly take place with the company when the next application for a wages claim will be made after taking into consideration the arbitration award.

Hydrocortisone and digoxin payments

Payment for hydrocortisone cream and ointment on Form FP10 has, since 1964, been on the basis of extemporaneous preparation, says the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee. However, where there are difficulties in obtaining hydrocortisone, the Department of Health has agreed with PSNC that a proprietary brand may be supplied and payment will be certified upon appropriate endorsement.

PSNC warns pharmacists, in the

December *Newsletter*, that prescriptions for digoxin 0.0625mg and 0.125mg tablets must be endorsed accordingly if a proprietary product is dispensed. Without endorsement the price of the cheapest generally available product will be allowed. Digoxin 0.25mg tablets are included in Part VA of the Drug Tariff and consequently are paid at that basic price regardless of endorsement.

Mr J. Foster Firth retires from 'C & D'

Mr J. Foster Firth, MPS, has retired after 32 years service with *Chemist & Druggist*. He joined the advertising department in June 1946 and later became sales executive for London and the south, last year being Benn Publications Ltd "salesman of the year."

Together with his wife Isabel, Mr Firth was apprenticed to T. Ridley & Son Ltd, Carlisle. Both qualified from the South London College of Pharmacy, Foster in October 1932 and Isabel in July 1933. Shortly after qualifying he joined Bayer Products Ltd, representing the company in London and Surrey during the time their first sulphonamide, Prontosil, was launched. He left in December 1941 to join May & Baker Ltd, transferring to transfusion fluids production at Allen & Hanburys Ltd after two years.

His main hobby is fell-walking and climbing. Throughout his life he has taken a keen interest in organ music. He spends much of his spare time on local government affairs, being chairman from time to time of various residents' organisations.

His wife has followed a career in hospital pharmacy, retiring recently from St Thomas' Hospital, London. They have one son, Donald, who has a number of business interests in London.

Left: J. Foster Firth (right) receives his leaving gift, a heated food cabinet, from Mr Timothy Benn, deputy chairman and managing director of Benn Bros Ltd. **Right:** Foster reminisces with Mr W. S. Bowman, *C&D* markets editor, who retired from full-time employment in 1975. Joining in is Mrs Foster Firth.



PSNC concerned about Brufen price increase

The Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee is seeking a meeting with Mr Roland Moyle, Minister for Health, over a recent 30 per cent increase in the price of Brufen.

Mr J. P. Kerr, member of the Pharmaceutical Society's Council, has been reported as saying that the Department of Health had turned a blind eye to artificially increased prices of drugs supplied to the NHS as a means of curbing cheap exports to the Continent.

The Department of Health has confirmed that it came to a special arrangement for Boots Co Ltd to repay "excess profits" to the treasury as part of a complex negotiation under the Pharmaceutical Price Regulation Scheme. It was an agreement restricted solely to this company for one particular drug.

However, a spokesman for Boots Co told *C&D* that Brufen was introduced in 1969 with a basic NHS price of £12 for 500 tablets 200mg. In 1973 the Department of Health told the company to reduce this price to £9. After further negotiations in 1977 the Department agreed to a price increase of 35 per cent to £12.15, so that the cost of 500 tablets 200mg had only risen by £0.15 since 1969. The spokesman said there had never been any question of the price of Brufen coming down when the patent expired in 1978.

Mr Alan Smith, PSNC's chief executive, told *C&D* that if prices were going up by means of these "special arrangements," pharmacists would suffer serious cash flow problems as equilibrium of the price change mechanism would be upset.

NI contributions increases approved

Draft amendments to social security contributions were approved recently in the Commons. Under the proposals, the basic National Insurance class 2 self employed contribution would increase in April from £1.90 to £2.10 a week. Class 4 would remain at 5 per cent but the range of profits or gains on which it is levied would be from £2,250 to £7,000 a year instead of the present £2,000 to £6,250. The maximum class 4 increase would be £25 a year.

The new upper limit of £7,000 is the annual equivalent of the new £135 a week upper earnings limit for employees and employers (£6,250 is equivalent to the present £120 limit). For example, those employees not contracted out and earning £135 or more would pay £8.77 per week compared to £7.80 at present. The employer's contribution on that would be increased from £12 to £13.50. Contracted out employees would pay £5.89 (at present £5.24) and their employers £8.30 (£7.39). The level of earnings below which the self-employed are exempted

payment of class 2 would be raised from £950 to £1,050 a year. Voluntary class 3 rates would increase from £1.80 to £2 a week.

PATA elections

In the Proprietary Articles Trade Association council election for 1979 the following were returned unopposed: *Manufacturing section*—E. C. De Witt & Co Ltd, Optrex Ltd. *Wholesale section*: East Anglian Wholesale Supplies Ltd, Northern Pharmaceuticals Ltd. *Retail section*: G. W. Herdman, J. R. Marshall.

WESTMINSTER REPORT

Vitamin supplement prices up

Because of increased raw material and production costs the United Kingdom Health Ministers have agreed on price increases to take effect from January 15, 1979, for vitamin supplements which can be bought at clinics and welfare distribution centres.

Children's vitamin drops will cost £0.10 a bottle instead of £0.09, and vitamin tablets for expectant and nursing mothers will cost £0.24 per container instead of £0.17.

In written reply to Mrs Helene

Hayman, Mr Roland Moyle, Minister for Health, announced in the Commons that vitamin supplements will continue to be available free to certain people.

Labelling of paracetamol

Mr Laurie Pavitt, MP, asked the Secretary for Social Services whether he proposed to amend the Regulations covering the labelling of OTC paracetamol products to include a revised warning. Mr Moyle, Minister for Health, replied in a Commons written answer that he would shortly consult the representative organisations about a proposed amendment.

The Committee on the Review of Medicines has suggested that the warning should read: "Do not exceed the stated dose—an overdose is dangerous; medical attention should be sought immediately."

Eraldin reactions

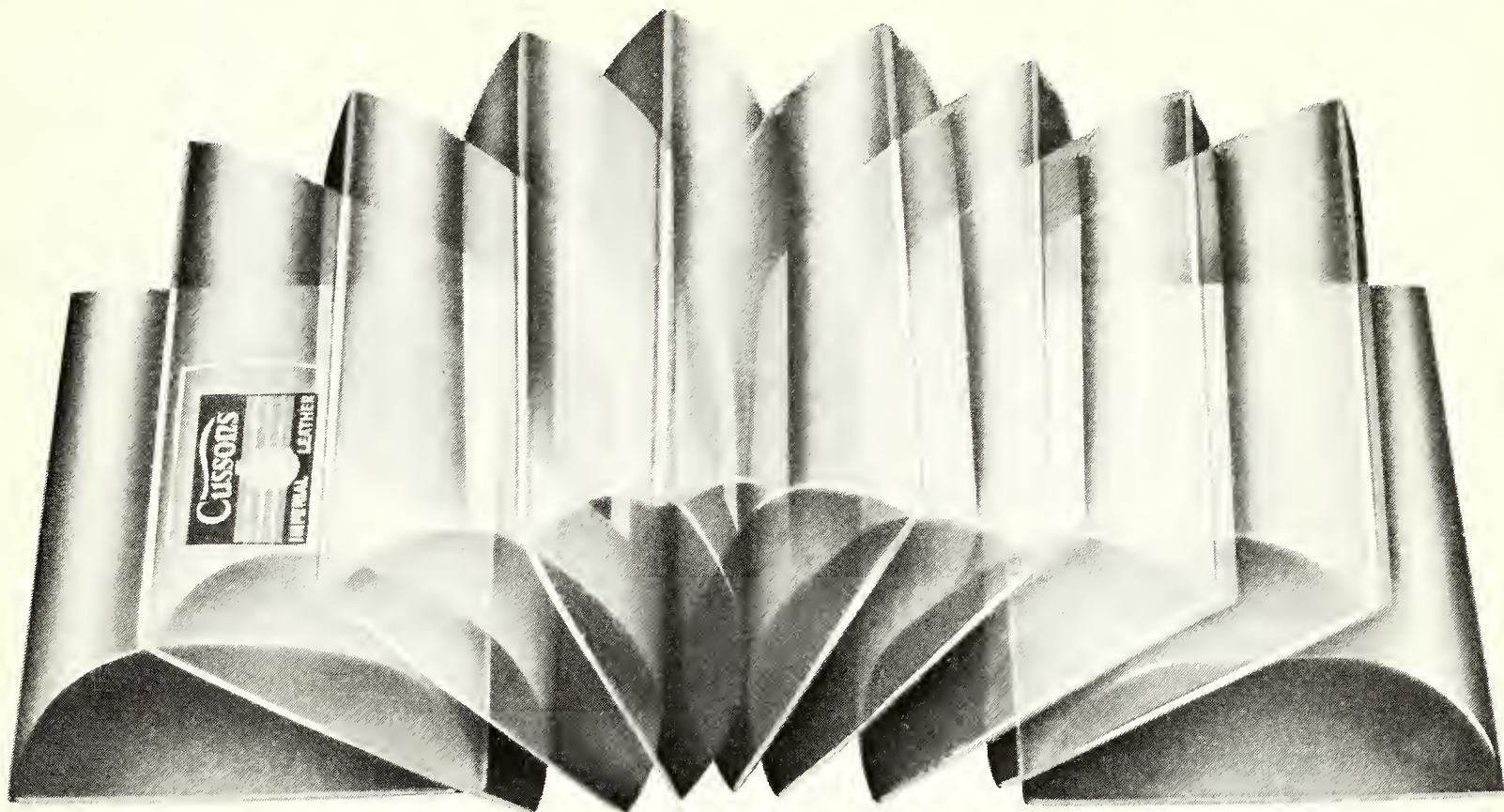
By November 30 the Committee on Safety of Medicines had received 2,185 reports of patients who had developed suspected adverse reactions to Eraldin compared with 1,623 reports a year before. Those reports, Mr Roland Moyle, Minister for Health, told Mr Sydney Tierney, include about 1,130 references to eye damage, 1,256 to skin reactions, 309 to deafness, 197 to sclerosing peritonitis and 589 to other manifestations of practolol-induced illness.

Many reports concerned patients with more than one of those conditions. Most of the suspected reactions occurred before or during 1974 when a possible association with Eraldin was first recognised. A cause-effect relationship could not be assumed in every case.

Mr Kingman Brewster, US Ambassador (right) studies a blade wrapping machine at Gillette's Isleworth factory. Claimed to be the first of its kind, the three-hour visit fulfilled a promise made by Mr Brewster, following a meeting with Gillette directors earlier in the year. Also shown are Mr J. Leftwich, factory manager, and Mrs E. Deeley, machine operator.



When our soap 'flips over' at Christmas, you could find it even more valuable than usual.



It could win you a First Prize of £500

Imperial Leather, the most luxurious family soap, will feature in a brand new television commercial over the Christmas and New Year period.

By looking out for the commercial, you could enter a very simple competition — with a splendid first prize of £500 and 40 second prizes of £50 each — in cash or holiday vouchers.

What you have to do is this: when the stylish new commercial comes on your TV screen, look at the 5 pictures of stills from the commercial shown below (A to E) and, in the boxes provided, number the pictures in the same order as they appear in the commercial. Then complete the simple sentence, "Imperial Leather rests on its name..." in not more than 12 words.

Then enclose two cut-outs from two Imperial Leather sugar bags or outers.

RULES

- * All entries must be received on official entry forms by 22nd January 1979. Proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of delivery.
- * No limit on the number of entries per person. Only one prize per person.
- * Open to all residents of the U.K. except employees (and their families) of Cussons Sons & Co. Ltd., their associated and subsidiary companies, their advertising agencies and companies connected with the competition.
- * Prizes will be awarded to those entrants who place the stills in the correct order and complete the sentence most aptly in the judges' opinion. The judges' decision is final. No correspondence can be entered into.
- * All entries become the property and copyright of Cussons Sons & Co. Ltd.
- * Prize Winners will be notified by post by 22nd February 1979 and a full list will be published after that date.
- * All entrants agree to be bound by the rules. For full rules, send S.A.E. to the competition address.

**Imperial Leather
rests on its name.**



A



B



C



D



E

Entry Form

Imperial Leather rests on its name

Complete and send to: Imperial Leather Competition,
P.O. Box 300, Manchester M60 1LP.

Name

Address

CD23/12

LETTERS

Delay in introducing CRC standards

In your issue of December 9 (p956) Mr Darling claims that the British Standards Institution was slow in producing a specification for child-resistant containers. I think BSI's record is better than Mr Darling claims.

In 1973, barely 12 months after we received a request from the Department of Health, we produced DD 30 parts 1 and 2, "Drafts for development, resistance of pharmaceutical packages to opening by children," dealing with reclosable containers and non-reclosable unit packages respectively. Again in 1975 we produced BS 5321, "Reclosable pharmaceutical containers resistant to opening by children," as the successor to the aforementioned part 1, within a few months of request, including the necessary modifications to the text. From that date we have run a supervisory committee which has certified, and the Department subsequently approved, a variety of reclosable containers which are freely available in the market place. We have not so far been asked to carry out any variety reduction in this field. We are still receiving requests for certification of new and modified designs.

The matter not yet resolved is how to deal with the non-reclosable unit packages, ie blisters, strips, etc. Such packages are required under the Medicines (Child Safety) Regulations, as amended, to be "selected with a view to their resistance to opening by children." BSI has made strenuous efforts at the Department's request to produce a standard that would replace these rather generalised words on which reliance has been placed so far, but still lacks research data, which others would have to supply before we would be prepared to endorse a system of physical tests as being capable of replacing the human test already given in DD 30 part 2. Even so, pending such information becoming available, there would be nothing to stop any manufacturer who might be in doubt from carrying out a test in accordance with DD 30 part 2.

R. W. Hodgkinson

Group manager

Services department, BSI

Service offered by Unichem

I read with sympathetic interest the plight of Mr B. Gilbert of Llandysul who is experiencing a sharp reduction in service from Unichem in the operation of their new rebate scheme.

I suggest that he considers buying a pharmacy on the Isle of Wight since Unichem are sparing no effort or expense to provide a service there second only to ourselves!

On December 4, Unichem doubled the

delivery service to Island pharmacists from Croydon depot, sending vans across the Solent by car ferry from Portsmouth each morning and afternoon.

PROSPER terminals were installed recently in a number of Island pharmacies within a week of the orders being signed whereas some mainland members waited up to two months for theirs.

These terminals have an "urgent" key. I understand that mainland members have to use this for any OTC required urgently with their next delivery, otherwise the OTCs will follow up to 48 hours after the "ethicals" with which they were ordered. This key is redundant for PROSPER members on the IOW because all OTCs are sent with "ethicals" on the next delivery. Furthermore, when an order sent by PROSPER terminal is subject to "ethical out of stocks," the pharmacy concerned is advised by phone so that alternative arrangements can be made.

All this effort is in marked contrast to Mr Gilbert's experience. It suggests that, whilst all Unichem members are equal, some are more equal than others!

D. P. Mulholland

Managing director

Graham Tatford & Co Ltd

Ryde, Isle of Wight

Mr P. J. Dodd, managing director, Unichem Ltd, writes: "The service that Mr Mulholland describes as being available to pharmacists on the Isle of Wight is also available throughout the mainland, including the areas of Portsmouth, Southampton and Bournemouth. Any independent pharmacist not currently taking advantage of what this competitor has kindly described as preferential service has merely to contact Unichem in order to reap the obvious benefits."

Thirteen items for one patient

We noted with interest the letter in your issue of December 2 from Mr S. Timmins. Today, however, we passed his total by two—13 items for one patient.

The items were: DF 118 2 tds. 280; Stemetil 5mg bd, 60; Burinex K 2 mane, 60; Dorbanex elixir, 10ml nocte 2 x 300ml; Septrin 2 bd, 30; Fungilin lozenges, 1 qds OP; Brufen 400mg, tds 120; Prednisone 5mg, bd 100; Indocid suppositories, nocte 30; Asilone suspension, 10ml tds 4 x 300ml; Valium 10mg qds, 120; Tryptizol 25mg, 3 nocte 90; Mandrax 2 nocte, 60.

Is this a record?

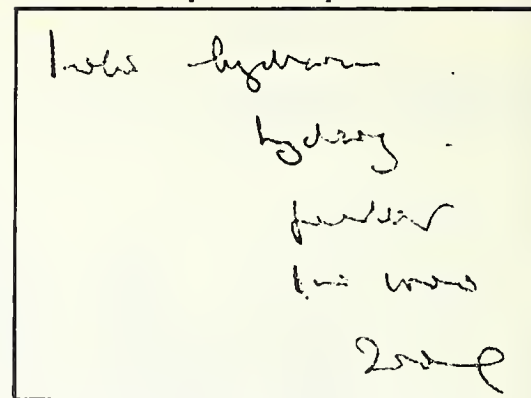
Nicholas Wood

Brentwood, Essex

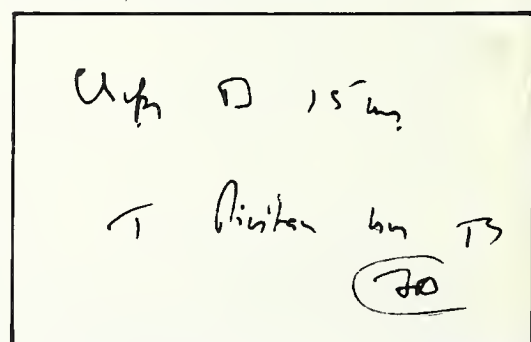
□ A subscriber was presented recently with a prescription for the following items (and spellings): Benilyn with codine, 15-20ml QDS; Piriton 2mg 16, 1BD; Oraldine 200ml, 20ml in warm water to gargle TDS; ampicillin 250mg 40, 1 QDS; Phenergan 25mg 3, 1 nocte if disturbed sleep.

The prescription was in the doctor's own handwriting and the patient was suffering from a cough and cold.

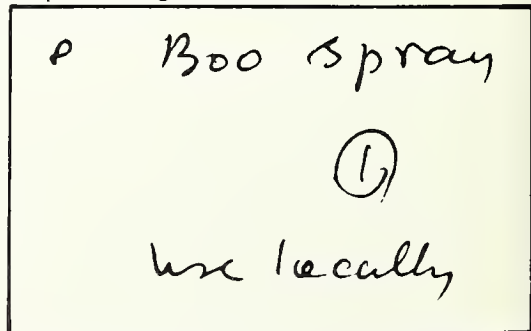
Prescription posers



Our subscriber needs to phone this doctor several times a day about scripts but as the doctor likes to have a chat he is not likely to improve his handwriting for this reason. This script should read lotio hydrous hydrarg perchlor 1 in 1000, 200ml.



The Prescription Pricing Authority queried what our subscriber in Nottingham had supplied for the first item. Answer—a crepe bandage 15 cms.



A request for Boots (ie PR) spray

A Preston subscriber was amused to receive a request for "Sister Puritan" tablets, written on a "bit of paper mi mum gave mi." After learning that the product was for cystitis, our subscriber deduced that the lady wanted Cystopurin.

APTS seeks members

The Association for the Prevention of Theft in Shops is seeking more members. In 1976, 60 retailers pledged support for two years, but since then many others have sought advice from the Association.

Financial assistance is provided to APTS as 0.01 per cent of a member's profits with a minimum of £25. Potential members need to name an amount which they would be able to provide at the end of each calendar year, although no money need be sent initially. Pledges should be sent to APTS treasurer, Mr C. Paterson, managing director, British Home Stores, 129 Marylebone Road, London, NW1.

23/30 December 1978



Mr Ronald Macnab (left), who founded the world-wide SmithKline Animal Health operation in the United Kingdom 28 years ago, was guest of honour at SmithKline headquarters in Welwyn Garden City, Herts, at a luncheon to celebrate record sales of animal health products. Now retired, Mr Macnab is a Fellow of the Pharmaceutical Society. He is seen with Mr Han van Veen, area director, SmithKline.

Mr C. Davidson, has been nominated as president of the National Chamber of Trade for acceptance at the annual meeting in May. He was elected to the NCT board of management in 1975.

News in brief

□ Payments to Scottish general medical practitioners for general practice trainees have been increased by 10 per cent with effect from April 1, 1978.

□ Chemist contractors in England in September dispensed 24,377,047 prescriptions (14,814,801 forms) at a total cost of £54,334,348 in representing an average cost of £2.23 per prescription.

□ The Medicines (Collection and Delivery Arrangements—Exemption) Order 1978 (SI No. 1421, £0.10) and the Medicines (Exemption from Licences) (Importation) Order 1978 (SI No. 1461, £0.20) are now available from HM Stationery Office.

□ The price of the "Lifting instructors' manual" published by the Back Pain Association was incorrect in *C&D* December 9, p957. It should be £1.75 (including postage) and can be obtained from the Association, Grundy House, Somerset Road, Teddington, Middlesex.

□ A course manual to introduce supervisors and managers to their responsibilities for health and safety at work has been produced by the Distributive Industry Training Board. Subjects covered include the current legal climate on health and safety; organisation; the effect of accidents; people and premises; safety procedures; training; and a hazard spotting exercise. The manual is £12.50 and hand-outs for 20 people are also available for £2.70, from the Distributive Industry Training Board, MacLaren House, Talbot Road, Stretford, Manchester M32 0FP.

by Xrayser

Patient registration

If I had a group practice surgery next door—from which you may immediately, and correctly, deduce that I haven't—I would be an enthusiastic advocate for patient registration. Once registered with me, patients would have to return for all their prescriptions, thus generating permanent traffic; and patients who come into our pharmacies with a prescription, have been known to buy other goods while they are waiting.

I am not dismissing the fact that if we made complete medication records, it could provide a useful second line of defence for patients, particularly in these days of receptionist-written scripts and repeats, but I happen to think that it is the doctor's responsibility to look after his patients—and that certainly means having a record system good enough to prevent him ordering products which may previously have caused problems.

The public still feel that their doctor will look after them when they are unwell. If he is uncaring, or so without discipline that he will write a script without reference to the treatment records he should keep, then he is irresponsible and is not doing what he is paid for. I feel strongly about this, for I once had the misfortune to locum in a pharmacy which maintained such records, only to find one of the local GPs using us as his unpaid memory bank. Very flattering? No, tedious, time consuming, and wrong.

From discussions in my area, where four or five pharmacies are in fairly close competition, the last thing any of us want is allocation of patients, voluntary or otherwise. Problems would arise over rotas, and supplies, when, say, one had an out of stock and the patient would not wait. How would we maintain accurate records then? Not only that. Free movement of patients stimulates and maintains our standard of service. Ultimately it would be the patients themselves, particularly the active who would resent, rather than welcome any restriction of their freedom to get their prescription dispensed where and when they found it convenient.

Counter prescribing

In your report of a symposium on home medicines last week, Dr Gordon Fryer of Reckitt & Colman said that he thought it reasonable for pharmacists to be able to give out small supplies of hydrocortisone cream $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent and diazepam, or antihistamines, as sedatives. I am inclined to agree that we ought to be able to counter-prescribe a wider range of effective products, for how many times have we referred patients to doctors and had them return with scripts for the very thing we had in mind. (And often with far more than was needed.) Yet I am not so sure of myself that I would want to start giving out hydrocortisone cream, for it has a wonderful way of masking quite nasty conditions which are perhaps not easy of diagnosis. I think I'll stick to simples until I pass a course in dermatology . . .

Christmas week

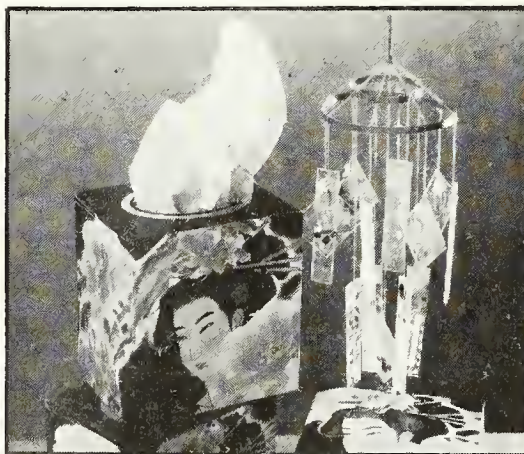
What with the radio and television giving news of phenomenal spending this year, with the big stores 20 per cent up, I have again to wonder at the difference between town centre and suburban shops. We have had our usual steady build up over the month, with some lines reflecting the heavy television advertising. "It" is a sell out (nice pack that) and Kodak have done us proud. It looks as though I'll just about hit my target. This year I go home for three whole days with the family, to eat, drink, and be merry: to ponder the occasion and to be truly grateful for what I have been given. I wish you a Merry Christmas.

COUNTERPOINTS

New Dixcel Studio range from British Tissues

British Tissues are introducing a new range of tissues called Studio by Dixcel which will be launched through selected trade outlets on January 30, 1979. Studio tissues are packed in distinctive square boxes decorated with oriental illustrations of peach and cherry blossom and geisha girls in pastel shades against a black background. The paintings on the box are the work of an oriental artist, Fei Kheng-Wu, whose signature is a feature of the design. Boxes are predominantly pale pink or pale green tying in with the colours of the two-tone tissues of lilac/rose or emerald/jade. Dixcel Studio packs contain 100 two-ply interleaved tissues, each 20.6cm by 22.8cm—said to be a larger sheet size than any competitive brand.

"Cosmetic" tissue packs are estimated to be the fastest growing sector of the facial tissues market and now represent 8.6 per cent of the total. Research shows



them to be a personal purchase by a woman for herself, appealing in particular to the 16 to 25 age groups and the over 40s. From attitude studies conducted by the company, they believe that the new Studio packs carry strong shelf appeal. *British Tissues Ltd, 101 Whitby Road, Slough, Berks.*

Imperial Leather's Xmas campaign

The first in a new generation of television commercials for Imperial Leather soap is to be screened on December 25 as the spearhead of a £250,000 campaign in all areas including Ulster and Channel for a five week period. The first spots are booked during the Morecambe and Wise show on Christmas day. Also included in the Christmas promotional package are two competitions for trade and consumers. Prizes include cash or holiday vouchers totalling £500,000. New pack designs have also been introduced to support the campaign.

Called "flipover" the new television commercial features a tablet of Imperial Leather soap that literally flips over to prove that "Imperial Leather rests on its name". Imperial Leather's marketing manager John Arden of Cussons comments, "although our soap rests on its name, we cannot afford to do so. With the increased competition for brand leadership we have embarked on what is our heaviest ever campaign over the Christmas/New Year period to consolidate our market position".

Entry forms and details of the competitions will appear in the pull-out television sections of the *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Record*, *Sunday Mirror*, *Sunday People*, *Sunday Mail* and *Reveille* in the last week of December. Entrants will be invited to list in order of appearance in the new commercial five still pictures and complete a tie-breaker sentence. All entries will require proof of purchase.

First prize is £500 with 40 second prizes of £50 each in cash or holiday vouchers. The competition closes on January 22. *Cussons Sons & Co Ltd, Kersal Vale, Manchester M7 0GL.*

Bayer's plans for Mafu in 79

Bayer UK Ltd will again be backing its Mafu range with a large advertising and promotion campaign—totalling £500,000—in 1979. Launched by the company's consumer products group with a £400,000 budget the company says that Mafu has achieved brand leadership in the chemist trade, capturing an overall 23 per cent share in a year when insecticide sales generally suffered because of the poor summer weather.

It is estimated that the chemist trade accounts for 24 per cent of sales in a market with £10.5-million at RSP, which is split equally between solid (slow release) products and sprays. Commenting on the brand's success, Ian Black, marketing manager, says: "Mafu's performance in its first season has proved what we strongly believed when we launched the product—that this was an under-developed market in which the consumer demanded a wider choice than had hitherto been available."

Emphasising the company's commitment to innovation in the markets in which it operates, Mr Black explained that two of the Mafu products have now been further developed to provide the housewife with an even more effective solution to the problem of flies and insects around the home. The concentra-

tion of dichlorvos in both the Mafu four-month slow release strip and the four-month block has been increased to give a more sustained effect. The strip, which can be either suspended or placed on a convenient surface, now has a re-sealable plastic bag enclosed in the pack, enabling the user to store it safely when it is not required. The closeable Mafu block has been re-designed to incorporate an adjustable cover which enables the user to control the release of insecticides. *Bayer UK Ltd, consumer products group, Burrell Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 1TP.*

ON TV NEXT WEEK

Ln—London; M—Midlands; Lc—Lancashire; Y—Yorkshire; Sc—Scotland; WW—Wales and West; So—South; NE—North-east; A—Anglia; U—Ulster; We—Westward; B—Border; G—Grampian; E—Eireann; CI—Channel Island.

From December 23 to December 29

Alka Seltzer: All except M
Anadin: All except U, E
Aviance: All areas
Beechams powders: All except E
Buttercup: M, Y, NE, WW, Sc
Contac 400: All areas
Galloways: Ln, So, A
Head & Shoulders: All except E
Imperial Leather soap: All areas
Ladyshave: All areas
Liquifruta: All areas
Medinite: All areas
Mentho Lyptus: All except U, E
Night Nurse: All except E
Philishave: All areas
Pure & Simple: All areas
Silvikrin hairspray: All areas
Sinex: All areas
Sucrets: Sc
Veno's: All except E
Zest: M, Lc, B, Sc

From December 30 to January 5

Alka Seltzer: All except M
Anadin: All except U, E
Anadin: All except U, E
Beechams powders: All except E
Contac 400: All areas
Galloways: Ln, So, A
Head & Shoulders: All except E
Imperial Leather soap: All areas
Medinite: All areas
Mentho Lyptus: All except U, E
Night Nurse: All except E
Philishave: All areas
Sinex: All areas
Sucrets: Sc
Vaseline Intensive Care lotion: All except U, E, CI
Vaseline petroleum jelly: All except U, E, CI
Veno's: All except E
Zest: M, Lc, B, Sc

Natural Wonder acceptance 'better than expected'

Eddie Styring, general manager of Natural Wonder cosmetics at Revlon told *C&D* this week that acceptance of the new range of Natural Wonder cosmetics has been found to be even better than expected, and, he added, it had been expected to be good.

It is now almost three months since this compact range of colour cosmetics was launched (*C&D*, September 23, p499). Although it is not being offered to stores which do not already have a Revlon franchise, it is still estimated to be in about 1500 shops.

Because both the sell in and sell out to date have been exceeding expectations the advertising expenditure has been increased for next year with four bursts planned in major women's magazines.

Even though discussions are being held with Woolworths at the moment and an experiment is being carried out with British Home Stores, Eddie Styring says there are definitely no plans to sell Natural Wonder cosmetics through supermarket outlets. He emphasised that in his opinion the range is a "natural" for the smaller chemist outlet, presenting as it does very little trouble to the retailer. The size of the range is manageable and will stay that way—there are no major product additions planned and new shade

additions will always be countered with old shade withdrawals. There are at present 52 products and it is unlikely that there will ever be many more than this.

That the marketing of Natural Wonder requires a wholly different approach from other Revlon products has been acknowledged by the recent divisionalisation that has taken place. There are now four Revlon divisions; one for Revlon products, one for Charlie, one for Natural Wonder and the last for the company's toiletries. The Natural Wonder range is really the first launch that Revlon have undertaken seriously in the popular price cosmetic market, and once again Mr Styring stressed that the package offered to smaller retailers is felt to be an attractive one, as it is ungarlanded by any of the usual cosmetic fripperies. It is small and comprehensive, easily displayed and requires very little involvement at the point of sale. Blister packaging and self-selection have been found to be acceptable concepts to the majority of cosmetic consumers in the UK. They like to see exactly what they're buying but also like to be able to choose for themselves, avoiding any possible embarrassment which might be experienced when consulting a salesgirl. *Revlon, 86 Brook Street, London W1.*

Simply for Skin on radio



Simply for Skin, the range of skin care products by Natural Care (Glastonbury) Ltd, which went national in September, is said to be selling in (and out) "extremely well". It was on test market in 100 retail outlets for some time before the national launch and was said to have proved "popular".

The range, comprising a cleansing lotion, freshner, moisturiser and night care cream, is currently being advertised on commercial radio. The campaign, on Capital, Clyde, Forth, BRMB, Piccadilly,

Metro, Swansea and City radio stations, will run through until March. Press advertising will continue to appear in the *TV Times*, *Woman's Own* and *Girl about Town* until February. There are more advertising plans formulated for 1979.

The Simply for Skin products are being distributed through *Pharmagen Ltd, Chapel Street, Runcorn, Cheshire.*

Hymosa gift packs

Two Hymosa gift packs are available from New Era. The three-in-one (£1.20) contains cleansing lotion, skin freshner and vitamin E cream and the four-in-one (£1.72) contains these products plus a moisturiser. *New Era Laboratories Ltd, 39 Wales Farm Road, London W3 6XH.*

Holiday closings

Cox, Arthur H.: closed from December 22 until January 2, 1979.

De Witt International Ltd: closed from 3.30 pm, December 22 and re-opening January 2.

Dome Laboratories: despatch department closed from 12.00 noon, December 22, re-opening on January 2.*

E. Merck Ltd: from 12 noon December 22 to December 28. Closed also on January 1, 1979.

'C&D' driver third in Cossack Mini Press rally



C&D's "driver" Colin Petty (left) is seen receiving third prize in the Press section of the Cossack Mini rally from rally driver, Roger Clark (right). Reckitt & Colman sponsored the rally which was held in Battersea Park, London. Twenty eight drivers of Cossack Mini's entered their cars in the rally, which comprised tests devised, controlled and assessed by the RAC. The overall winner was John Lemon of Plumstead Common, London. The special Press event was won by Tony Fish, presenter of BBC Radio London's programme, "London Live". *C&D's* beauty editor Kim Pearl, nominated Colin Petty to drive for *C&D*.

May & Baker Ltd: will be closed from noon, December 22 until 9 am, December 27. The offices and warehouse will also be closed on January 1, 1979.*

Parke Davis & Co: the plant, laboratories and offices, and the professional products marketing and medical divisions of **Warner Lambert (UK) Ltd** will be closed from noon, December 22 until 8.35 am, January 2. Personnel will be available on December 27, 28 and 29 to answer queries and arrange the despatch of urgent orders. The Carfin distribution depot will be closed from noon, December 22 until December 27. The depot will be closed, too, from January 1 to January 5 inclusive, re-opening on January 8.

Vestric Ltd: branches and depots in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and the head office in Runcorn, will be closed on December 25 and 26, re-opening on December 27. They will also be closed on January 1, 1979. Branches in Scotland will also be closed on January 2, 1979.

*Emergency supplies available from John Bell & Croyden, Wigmore Street, London W1.

COUNTERPOINTS

Bargain buys from Unichem for the New Year

Unichem's first "bargain" offer of 1979 includes 39 nationally advertised products, six "baby products" offers, and six Procter and Gamble products, the latter linked to a holiday promotion.

The "bargain buys" are on offer from January 10-27, the "baby products" from January 17-30, and the Procter and Gamble products from January 17 to February 23. The full list of products is as follows: Alberto VO5 shampoo and Alberto VO5 hairspray; Band-Aid clear wallet and Band-Aid waterproof wallet; Brut 33 shampoo and Brut 33 hair control; Colgate dental cream; Cream Silk; Cussons brilliantine; Cuticura hand cream and Cuticura lotion; Dr Whites Panty Pads; Elnett hairspray; Feminax; Handy Andies; Harmony colourants; Imperial Leather shave stick refill; Johnson's baby powder and Johnson's cotton buds; Kleenex super 3 3-ply tissues; Kotex Simplicity mini pads; Libresse towels; Listerine; Matey shampoo; Mentho Lyptus; Milk of Magnesia tablets; Night Nurse; Polycolour; Polytint; Poly Simply Sensational, Supersoft hairspray; Wella Blo Dry lotion; Wella

Body 'n Bounce; Wella creme rinse; Wella hair set; Wella shampoo; Wilkinson Sword bonded blades; new Woodleigh green marbled soap and Woodleigh green shampoo.

Baby products offer will include: Cow & Gate strained baby foods, junior meals and toddlers baby foods; Golden Babe Bambi nappies; Milupa foods & Milumil.

Procter & Gamble products on offer in January and February are Camay soap; Crest; Fairy toilet soap, Head and Shoulders cream and lotion and Lenor.

For Unichem's first exclusive offer to shareholding members at the start of the new year, seven nationally-advertised products are offered between January 10-27. The full list is: Brut 33 shampoo and Brut 33 hair control; Odor-Eaters twin pack (for a minimum order of 2 dozen retailers will receive a paid of 48 x 25p cash refund vouchers against consumer purchases of Odor-eaters, redeemable directly from Combe UK Ltd); SR toothpaste; Sunsilk hairspray; Tufty Tails and Wilkinson Sword double edge blades. *Unichem Ltd, Crown House, Morden, Surrey.*

Anestan slim pack

Anestan 24s are now available in new slim-line cartons and the tablets are now blistered in units of 12s instead of 8s. The price remains unchanged (£0.50) with trade price £4.21 per dozen. *Crookes Anestan Ltd, Thane Road West, Nottingham NG2 3AA.*

Dermicel new size

Dermicel tape 5cm by 5m (6, £6 trade; £1.50 each retail) will be available from January 1, 1979. There are plans to include 1.25 and 2.5cm sizes in the range during the year. *Johnson & Johnson Ltd patient care division, 260 Bath Road, Slough, Berks SL1 4EA.*

Wilkinson Sword trade competition

The temptation of winter in the Bahamas is the main prize in this year's trade competition for retailers of Wilkinson Sword scissors. The competition offers a fortnight's holiday for two in the Bahamas with £300 spending money as first prize. There will also be three runner-up prizes of holiday vouchers worth £200.

The entry form is in the shape of a sales presenter. Retailers are invited to submit one entry form for every ten

pairs of scissors which they purchase between now and the end of January 1979.

Entrants are asked to link the holiday photographs to the corresponding locations on the map and complete a tie-breaker. The tie-breaker involves estimating the number of people who have flown by Air Bahamas to Nassau over a fixed period of time and the panel of judges will include a member of the Bahamian tourist board in this country. The closing date for the competition will be mid-March, 1979.

During the period of the trade competition, Wilkinson Sword will continue with advertising support for their range of scissors, with advertisements in women's magazines as well as a full colour page advertisement in the *Daily Mail*. *Wilkinson Sword Ltd, Sword House, Hight Wycombe, Bucks.*

PRESCRIPTION SPECIALITIES

KLYX enema

Manufacturer Ferring Pharmaceuticals Ltd, 7 York Street, Twickenham, Middlesex TW1 3JZ

Description Unit dose applicator bottles, 120 or 240ml containing dioctyl sodium sulphosuccinate 0.1 per cent, sorbitol 25 per cent, methyl and propyl paraben 0.12 per cent, water to 100 per cent

Indications Evacuating colon in constipation, prior to radiographical or endoscopic examination of the abdomen and in obstetrics prior to delivery

Dosage Usually 120ml

Precautions Prolonged use may lead to irritation of anal canal

Storage Protect from light

Packs 10 x 120ml (£4.75 trade); 10 x 240ml (£7.50 trade)

Supply restrictions Pharmacy Only

Issued December 1978.

Colour of Alupent tablets

From time to time Boehringer Ingelheim receive reports of slight discolouration in batches of Alupent tablets and Alupent expectorant tablets. The company assures pharmacists that such discolouration does not adversely affect the product in any way and the tablets are satisfactory for use. *Boehringer Ingelheim Ltd, Southern Industrial Estate, Bracknell, Berks.*

Bendrofluazide added by Cox

Bendrofluazide 2.5 and 5mg tablets are added to Arthur H. Cox Ltd range of generic tablets. The 5mg tablets are available in 1,000s (£5.60 trade) and the 2.5mg in 500s (£1.60 trade). *Arthur H. Cox & Co Ltd, 93 Lewes Road, Brighton, East Sussex BN2, 3QJ*

Low protein biscuit

Aproten low protein and gluten-free biscuits (200g, £1.15 trade) have been introduced by Montedison Pharmaceuticals Ltd. They are prescribable on the NHS. *Montedison Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Kingmaker House, Station Road, Barnet, Herts EN5 1NU.*

Winthrop's delays

Winthrop Laboratories apologise for the delays in delivering orders which have been caused by industrial disputes. These disputes have now been settled and it is hoped that the stock situation will progressively improve. However, over the next few weeks some temporary prescription packs will be distributed in which products may not bear their usual markings; their composition and quality will not be changed. The products mainly affected will be Danol capsules and Pyrogastrene tablets. *Winthrop Laboratories, Sterling-Winthrop House, Surbiton-upon-Thames, Surrey KT6 4PH.*

BUSINESS MATTERS

A tightening up of expenses

By Paul Hilden*

Over the past few years, the Inland Revenue has been tightening up on business expenses. Stricter restraints are being placed on controlling directors and employees who earn over £7,500 per annum in the 1978-79 tax year. (For employees the amount will rise to £8,500 in the 1979-80 tax year.)

Controlling directors are affected whatever their incomes, and for employees, the expense figure is added to salary to determine whether the person is above or below the limit.

Where low interest loans are made to directors and those above the limit, a tax can be raised on the difference between the rate of interest charged and a notional sum fixed by the Treasury. The notional sum at present is 9 per cent. However, it would not apply to loans for house purchase provided they do not exceed £25,000. Directors and employees are also taxed on private medical insurance payments made by the business on their behalf whether on an individual basis or in a group scheme.

Health and safety

Fines: The maximum penalty that can be imposed by a magistrates court for any breaches of the health and safety regulations has been raised from £400 to £1,000.

Temperatures: Although minimum temperatures are laid down for reasonable working conditions in factories and offices, there is no maximum. However, if temperatures become so uncomfortably hot that it is unreasonable for employees to continue working, it has been held that it would be unfair to dismiss a worker who walked out, and compensation would be payable.

Loads: Under health and safety legislation it is illegal to expect an employee to lift, carry or move a load such that its weight may cause an injury. There is no fixed poundage laid down but one or two court decisions show that it could be a breach of the law to expect a woman to lift or carry over 40lbs and a man over 140lbs.

Insurance disclosure

In making proposals for business (or personal) insurance it is important to disclose all material facts. For example, for fire cover, the insurance company usually asks if a claim has been made before for fire damage to the building.

The insured is asked to give details. If he has had, say, two or three claims and only gives details of one, it could make the policy null and void.

*Pen name of a barrister

Leaving an awkward question blank does not help. Either the insurance company will send the form back for completion or the law has decided that leaving an answer blank counts as a "no". If the answer should have been "yes", the policy could be declared void.

The reasoning is that if the insurance company knew certain facts, it would have either charged an increased premium or, in extreme cases, refused to grant insurance at all.

Maternity refunds

A growing number of women employees are taking advantage of the Employment Protection Act provisions relating to the taking of paid maternity leave. To qualify, a woman must have worked for an employer for two years. (This is measured in the same way as the qualifying period for a woman to exercise her right of return; that is, from the day of joining employment until 11 weeks before the date of confinement.)

The payment to be made is nine-tenths of the weekly pay for six weeks less the amount of the national insurance maternity allowance whether or not the woman receives it. All employers pay towards a central fund for maternity paid leave as part of their national insurance contribution and therefore a full refund of the money paid to individual employees can be obtained.

Refusal of credit

The use of credit reference agencies is now widespread and protection is available to those seeking credit to ensure that the information credit reference agencies have about them is correct. There is a right to have details of the information held on them by credit reference agencies and the right to have incorrect information corrected.

Those in business can be affected in two ways. First, they may be granting or arranging credit for a customer or the business may itself be seeking credit. In either case, if you have been seeking credit for £5,000 or less and you suspect that a refusal has been occasioned because of a report of a credit reference agency, you can write to the agency (if you know of it) asking whether it has a file on you or your business.

If you do not know whether an agency has been used or if you do not know which one, you can write to the other firm arranging the credit and ask for the name and address of the agency. You must do this within 28 days of your last being in touch with the credit arranger. The name and address must be then given within seven days. If you are

arranging credit for a customer and he writes to you asking about an agency you, too, must give this information within seven days. The agency can then be asked for a copy of any file it might have on you.

The request must be in writing and a fee of 25p must be sent with the request. The file must be sent within seven days of the agency receiving the request and it will be accompanied by particulars of how to correct the file if detailed information on it is wrong.

If you request the agency to correct the particulars and it does not reply within 28 days, or if it refuses to alter the file, you can write yourself a note of correction of up to 200 words and ask them to add it to the file to be sent to anyone who requests information about you or your business. If you cannot get a satisfactory reply or if there is a refusal to correct the file, you should contact the Director General of Fair Trading, Field House, Bream's Buildings, London EC4A 1PR.

A useful service

Although the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) is commonly thought of in connection with intervention in industrial disputes, it provides other services for large and small employers. Among its activities are manpower planning, setting up discipline procedures including rights of appeal, redundancy agreements and communication facilities. Informal advice on labour relations problems is available.

There are offices in the regions and contact can be made either directly or through the Department of Employment.

Alterations

Many firms are often involved in extensions or alterations to their premises. In changing the character of the frontage for example, (a shop) or adding to the building, planning permission is required.

Altering the interior may not require planning permission but the work has to comply with building regulations administered by the local authority.

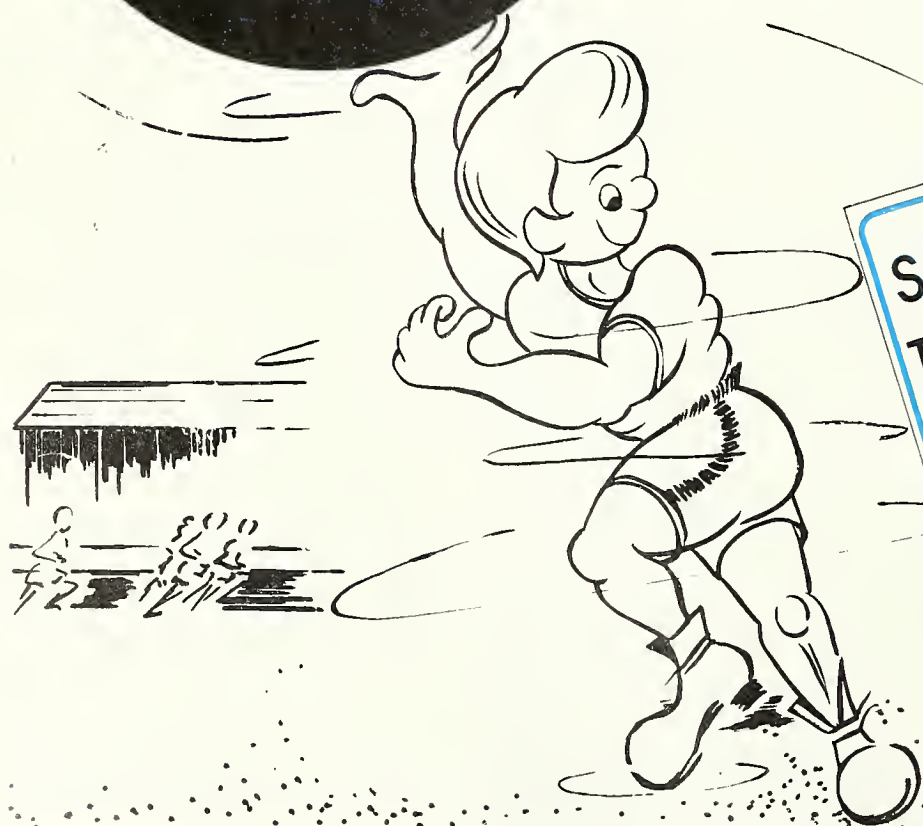
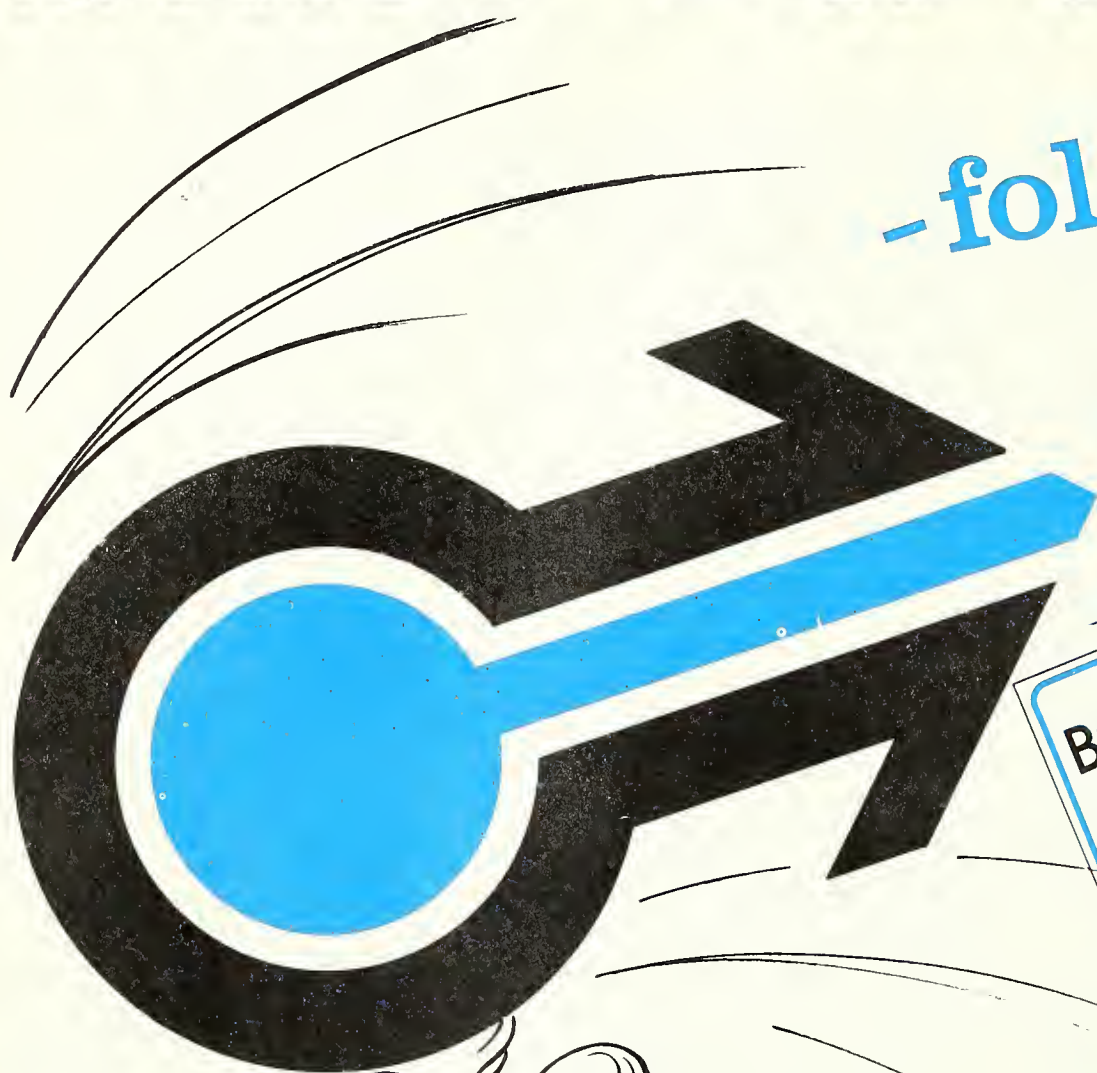
Although a good builder will see to all the formalities concerning the authority, it should be checked because there have been cases where work has been done that has not complied with the regulations. As a result alterations have had to be carried out and in some cases, the work completely re-done. The builder is, of course, liable if he undertook to comply with the regulations but if the builder has in the meantime gone into liquidation, the bill has fallen on the owner of the premises concerned.

□ A free quick-reference guide for busy employers on the individual rights of their employees has been published by the Department of Employment. The guide, "Individual rights for employees," explains employment protection legislation and sets out the corresponding obligations on employers. Copies are available in unemployment benefit offices, jobcentres and employment offices.

Start Off in the

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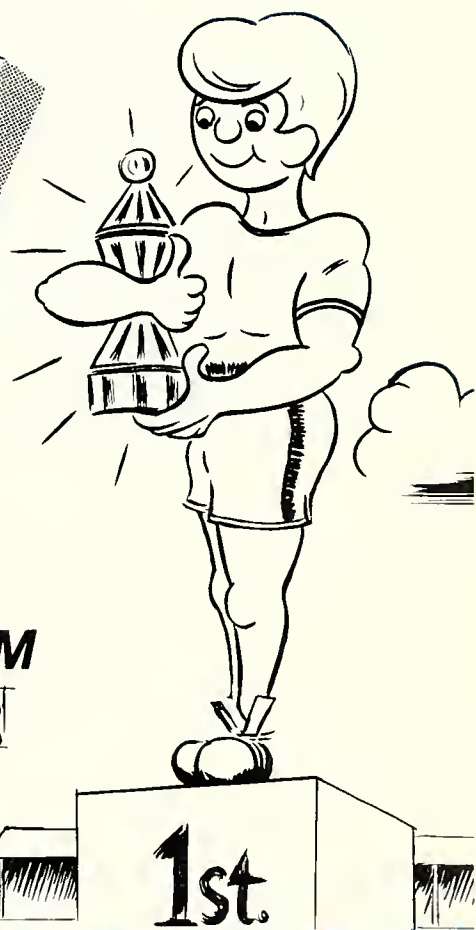
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To J.A.L. Speller, General Sales Manager, UniChem, Crown House, Morden, Surrey, CR3 2BH

I am an Independent Retail Pharmacist and would welcome more information about UniChem.

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Address _____

_____ Date _____

CD 1/79

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SHOPFITTING

Into 1979 and beyond

If asked where the chemist's future lies, most shopfitters will say in the development of a thriving counter trade. It is not that they necessarily see dispensing only businesses as unprofitable but they argue that a secure future demands a spread of risks.

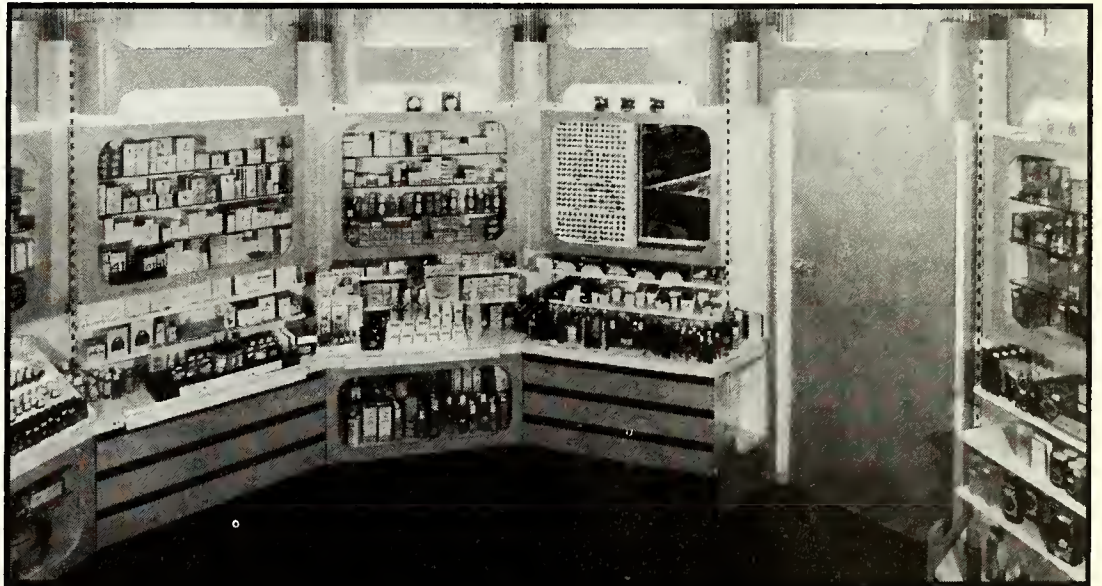
Some shopfitters see the traditional chemist disappearing leaving either multiples or independent "professional" retailers. Such "professionals", they say, follow careful strategies including market analysis. An important aspect of analysis is atmosphere. Creating the right environment can affect customer appeal and loyalty besides improving turnover.

Initial information required from market analysis includes customer potential and competition. From that must be decided the image that would develop that potential. Going upmarket may not be right in a relatively poor area and may even scare regulars away. The area and siting of the dispensary needs to be thought out in the light of proportion contributed to turnover and impact on customer attraction. Having enticed customers the method of sales could make an important difference to turnover. Do customers prefer personal service, self-selection or even supermarket self-service techniques? Such factors must be considered before a shop refit, not after.

Moves to larger units

A trend already in evidence and expected to continue is the development of pharmacies into larger units. Nordia feel that co-operative buying through voluntary trading organisations could lead on to jointly-owned pharmacies which would provide larger premises and benefits of a multi-pharmacist business.

Olney Bros expect the upmarket theme to continue but suggest decor, if not fittings, should be revised at least every five years. In tourist areas of London the company suggests two to three years would be more applicable to create renewed interest. To that end Olney supply Interplan 80 Plus which comprises basic show cabinets etc, with a separate decorative front frame to match the decor. By renewing the frames regularly the appearance can be changed considerably at relatively low cost. Olney also suggest pharmacists should consider



The 1979 look from Olney Bros. The cabinet front frames and pelmets can be changed to alter the decor without a major refit

spending more money to make dispensaries more efficient and congenial because much time can be spent there. They point to the amount spent on domestic kitchens and say housewives spend relatively less time in them than pharmacists do in dispensaries.

Finding that Europe usually provides the clue for future UK shopfitting trends, Olney Bros predict that the popular 1977 greens and yellows and this year's browns, creams and beiges will give way to aubergines, pinks and violets. Flooring has progressed through needle punch sheet to carpet tiles and on to soft tufted pile. Popular in Europe at present is a semi-crushed velvet carpeting.

For soft looks, Olney say, friezes are replacing pelmets and the extra cost of materials is counterbalanced by the reduced labour charges—fixing a sheet of suede is less labour intensive than painting the same area.

Predictions for 1979 and beyond from Dollar Rae include dispensaries with easy access to the pharmacist to strengthen the personal touch; more effective merchandising by increased use of display power and grouping like products for greater impact; reductions in concealed storage; a retail environment linked psychologically with well-being and health rather than with illness.

Remembering the trepidation with which chemists accepted self-selection in the early sixties, and the amazement

when increases in sales resulted, Nordia suggest the time has come for a further step—self-service.

The suggested scheme is that customers take a basket at the entrance, help themselves and pay at the cash desk on the way out. Controlled (or expensive) items would be purchased from the prescription (or for example, cosmetics) counters, wrapped, sealed and paid for at the counters, and therefore, ignored by the cash desk. Nordia feel the system could operate in a pharmacy as it does in a supermarket where wines are sold.

The company expects the main misgivings would concern pilferage. A remedy, they say, would be to place at the cash desk a member of staff who should work facing customers with vision unimpeded by high gondolas or displays. Another assistant should watch customers from the other end of the shop while counter serving.

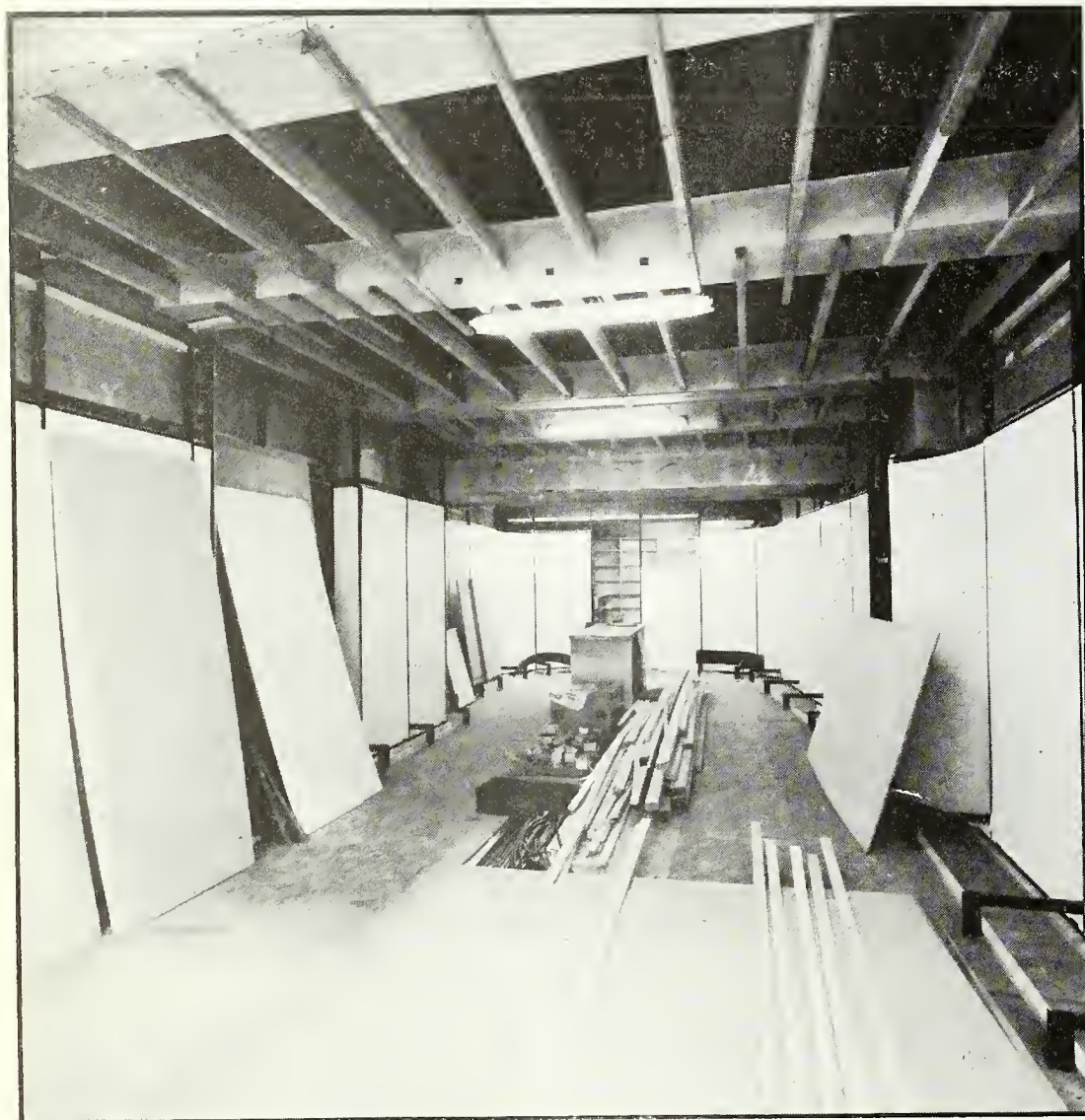
An advantage of the self-service system is that quiet periods are used for filling shelves and cleaning while busy periods are made easier because customers do more work themselves. Maximum use is made of labour which should be reflected in salary overheads.

Whatever the future may hold it is apparent that market research before changing decor and shopfitting is essential. As the shopfitters say, retailers will only get out of their businesses what they put in.

SHOPFITTING

IN THE MAKING...

A MODULAR SYSTEM



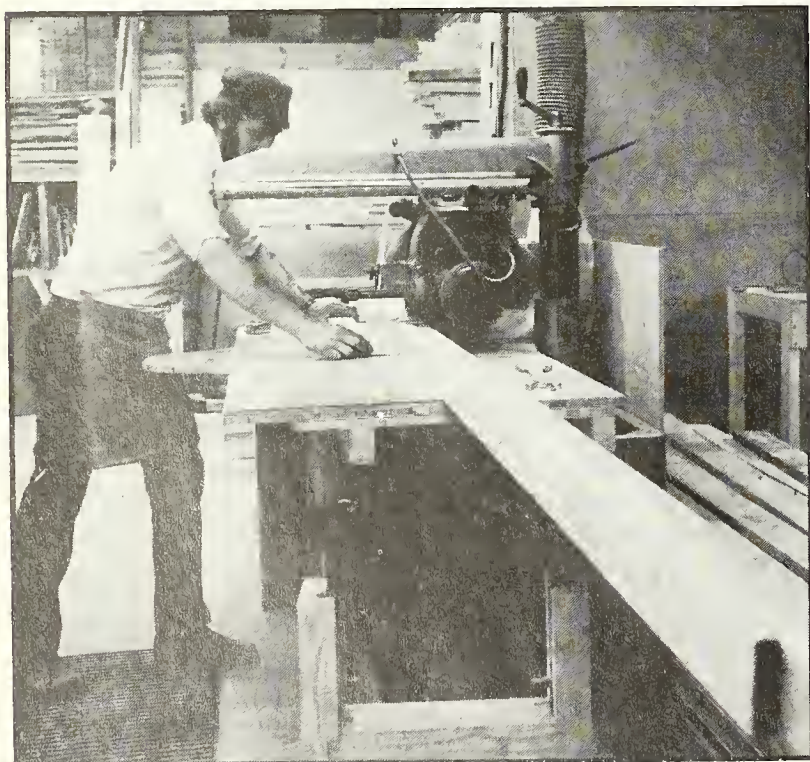
Olney Bros like to think of themselves as a bespoke shopfitter using modular systems. The factory in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, can supply modular units from stock or manufacture "specials" to order, providing flexibility and allowing continuity of a style throughout a shop.

The NPA approved company carries out refits, mainly to pharmacies, either directly or through agents, throughout the UK. Olney are currently negotiating for an agent in the Republic of Ireland. They also export to Holland, Belgium and the Middle East having recently completed a contract in Bahrain. In October, Olney Bros together with its subsidiary Interplan Electronics Ltd, were bought by Burns-Anderson Ltd, a Manchester shopfitting group.

Olney director, Mr F. Moore, warns pharmacists to compare like with like when considering quotations for a refit from different companies. Much depends on the materials used, the dimensions of units, the flexibility of systems and the amount of supplementary work involved. Olney, for example, can undertake plumbing, electrical alterations, and lighting, flooring and renovating, and therefore, are able to organise the work to the convenience of the client.

From the time of surveying the premises, a proposed plan with estimate is normally available within 10 to 14 days. A plan may take up to a day to prepare and is provided free of charge. If the

Above: The first stages of refitting in a shop which was not previously a pharmacy. **Below left:** Aluminium and timber is set and cut prior to despatch. **Right:** Detailed rebating being carried out on components. The tube is a dust extractor. In this section, mouldings on new units can often be matched to fittings remaining in the premises to be refitted



OR BESPOKE DESIGN

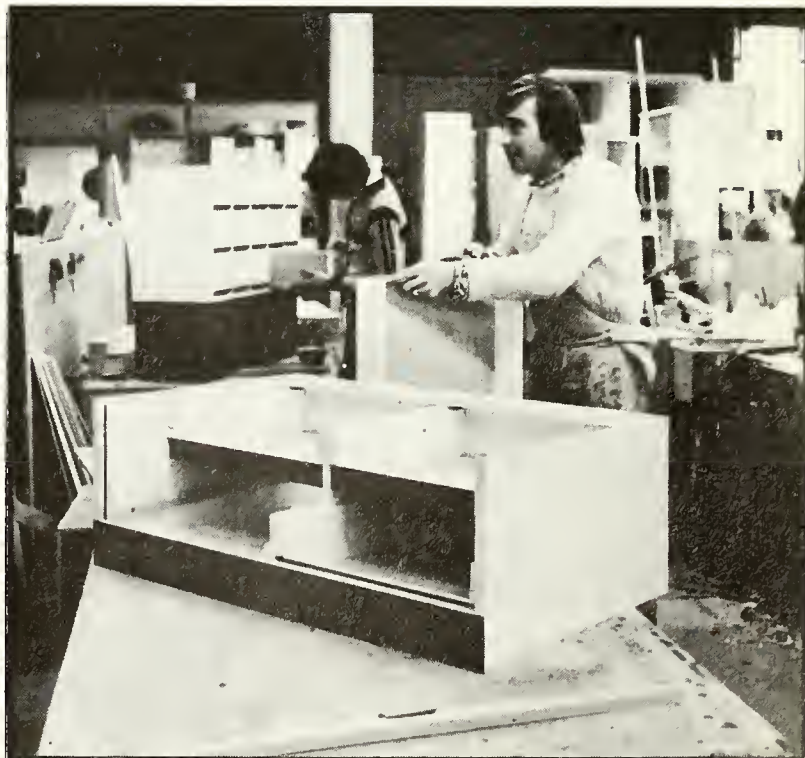
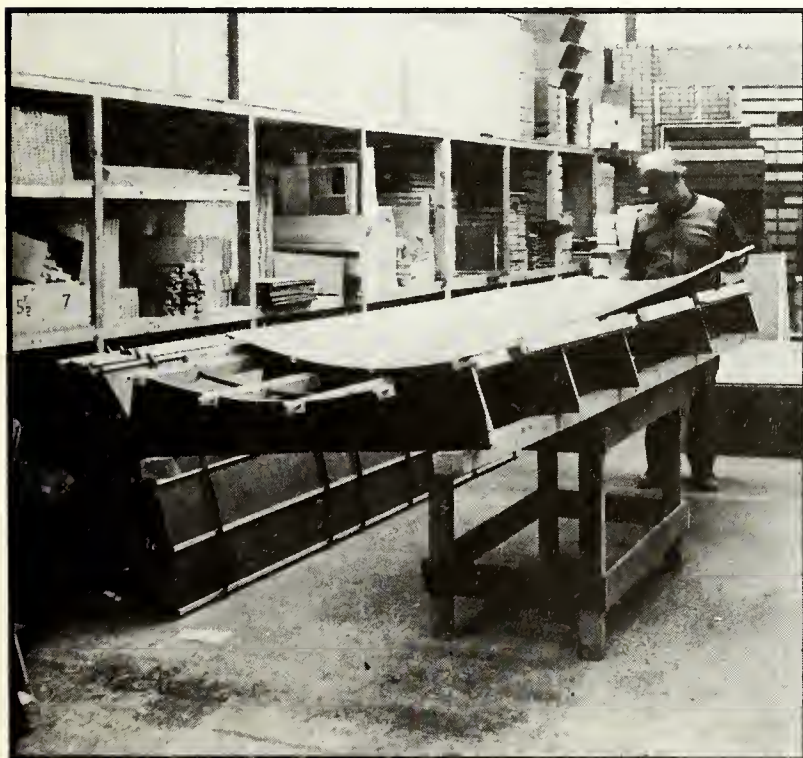
client expresses interest in the Interplan 80 Plus system, Olney's more expensive version of the basic Interplan, a co-ordinated sample of fittings and finishes is provided including carpeting and sales bag designs.

In the factory is held £100,000 of stock including finished goods. Block board is used for shelving and panels; chipboard is used for cabinet panels that have a laminated finish. Hardwoods form edgings where required. Laminates are used on all work surfaces and Melamine finish is used on side panels, pelmets and areas where toughness is required but which are not likely to receive undue wear and tear. Some units are stained and polished in natural wood finishes where required. Drawer sections are mainly of interlocking plastic panels with a finished wood front—as functional as timber but easier to open, Olney say.

A typical work flow through the factory would be: design and drawing; collated with others to assess how many parts require manufacture; shelves and panels cut from pre-bought board finished to width; "specials" cut; staining or spraying; assembly; checking and final finishing; packed and gathered for delivery. Existing shop mouldings can often be matched at the Olney factory. Approximately eight projects go through the pipeline at any one time, and about 10 main projects with other smaller jobs are undertaken per month.



Above: A finished project. Pelmets are chocolate brown with white stripe, carpet tiles are brown and counter panels are a co-ordinating beige. **Below left:** Olney's longest serving craftsman, Mr Williams, producing curved back assemblies. **Right:** Drawers being prepared for a slimline counter. Final trims are added just prior to collation for despatch



SHOPFITTING

Spacesaving boxes for the stockroom

Retailers can be caught between the extremes of spreading out merchandise neatly on stock room shelves for quick location and packing it as close as possible for economy of space. Boots use individual stockbins placed in existing shelves for small items. They specify bins of tough corrugated fibreboard (from £0.17 each) by Bankers Box, Doncaster.

Boots use two sizes, four ins and eight ins wide, both being 18 ins long and four ins high. Bins arrive flat and are not folded until needed. Because the bins can be pulled forward for access no arm space need be left above them. *Bankers Box Records Storage Systems, Doncaster Road, Kirk Sandall, Doncaster, South Yorks.*



New colours for Readiclip

Spur Systems International have introduced four new colours into their Readiclip display system. They are brown, yellow, orange and green. The standard base colour will be brown and plain or perforated back panels can be

selected in any of the new colours to harmonise with it. Shelves, brackets and all other standard accessories will be available in brilliant white or the new brown. *Spur Systems International Ltd, Otterspool Way, Watford, Herts.*

Skyhook for display suspension

Skyhook is the latest addition to Hallons range of display accessories. Available in two sizes, it is intended to provide an answer to suspension problems in display areas. Fitted with a double sided adhesive pad, size A (27 x 27 x 2mm) has been tested to a weight of 2kg, and size B (27 x 55 x 2mm) to 4kg. Both sizes are bagged in 50s and samples are available upon request. *Hallons Ltd, Perry Road, Harlow, Essex CM18 7PW.*

Decorating with houseplants

If houseplants or flowers would fit in with the image and decor of a pharmacy, they are available in a wide variety of natural or imitation species. Greenfingers Ltd, 264 Brixton Hill, London SW2, sell outright or, in the London area, supply and change regularly. Types and sizes vary from a nine foot Cocos palm tree to a three foot trailing ivy.

Chorley Floral Products Ltd, Redford Way, Belmont Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex, include in their range a lifesize arti-

We can help you



Last year, 226 chemist outlets in the UK ceased trading because they couldn't compete on equal terms with the big multiples, or with other retailers in their area.

Official statistics indicate that this trend is increasing.

If it's a problem that bothers you, modernisation could help.

In every single chemist outlet we've modernised, their turnover has gone up by a minimum of 20% . . . 5% is enough to pay for the refit within 3 years!

The reason for our success?
Our totally professional approach.

We work out with you what you need — to achieve the minimum 20% target. We tackle your shrinkage problem. Work out how to maximise impulse purchase potential, analyse customer flow and so on.

Interested?

It'll cost you nothing to find out.

Just clip the coupon . . . and profit by our experience!

ficial orange tree, should it be required. Custom-made displays for counters and windows are also available. Hallons Ltd, Perry Road, Harlow, Essex, produce an artificial spray of feather flowers and buds (£5.25 for 5).

AMS catalogue

A.M.S. (Store Fittings) Ltd are issuing a new catalogue illustrating their range of standard display equipment. The catalogue, in ring binder form, is divided into sections for each retail division. *A.M.S. Group, Rex House, 354 Ballards Lane, London N12 0HF.*

Strip lighting

The SKW Skeleton Strip lighting unit from Linolite Ltd, is designed to be installed rapidly in any restricted space where widespread illumination is required.

The fitting comprises white lamp holders mounted on a ready-wired aluminium spine. Integral features are a three-way

terminal block, which reduces wiring time; cable clamp; and "universal" switching unit. A choice of pull-cord or push-button switching is available; alternatively an unswitched version can be supplied. Also available is the KW reflector, comprising white lamp holders on a brightened aluminium reflector. It is designed to provide directional illumination in a confined space. *Linolite Ltd, Pier Road, Feltham, Middlesex.*

Plastic cash drawer

Adsit Developments Ltd have produced a polypropylene cash drawer (£35) said to give a smooth operation. Features include: Tutch Latch, allowing no visible means of opening; warning bell; under-counter or overcounter fixing and free-standing; six coin compartments with three note clips. Using an adding machine or calculator on top, the Adsit 300 drawer converts into a register. *Adsit Developments Ltd, Unit 14, Lee Bank House, Holloway Head, Birmingham B1 1HP.*

Kawneer redesign shopfront frames

Kawneer have redesigned their aluminium shopfront frames following market research among shopkeepers. When the company asked for views on existing aluminium frames small local shopkeepers felt most were too robust, had too many features, and therefore cost too much for their needs. A typical example was the universal two-way opening door.

Therefore Kawneer have introduced the Tri-Fab 300 range with slim sections at lower prices. But no corners have been cut to keep prices down, stresses the company. *Kawneer UK Ltd, Astmoor, Runcorn, Cheshire.*

Gingham film rolls

Hallons have introduced gingham film which is said to be ideal for window lining and forming backgrounds for in-store displays. It is available in two colours, red and blue, and is printed on clear film. The pattern shows through creating a double sided effect. It is available in 10m rolls, 1m wide. *Hallons Ltd, Perry Road, Harlow, Essex CM18 7PW.*

stay in business.

"We are currently running 40% above normal." Geoff Watman, Uxbridge Road, Middlesex.



Show me how I can achieve at least 20% increase in turnover.

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Company _____

Address _____

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storeplan

SHOP INTERIOR SPECIALISTS

CD 12

Storeplan Ltd., 48 Towerfield Road, Shoeburyness, Southend-on-Sea, Essex. Tel: 03708 3551/5911

23/30 December 1978

Chemist & Druggist 1017

SHOPFITTING

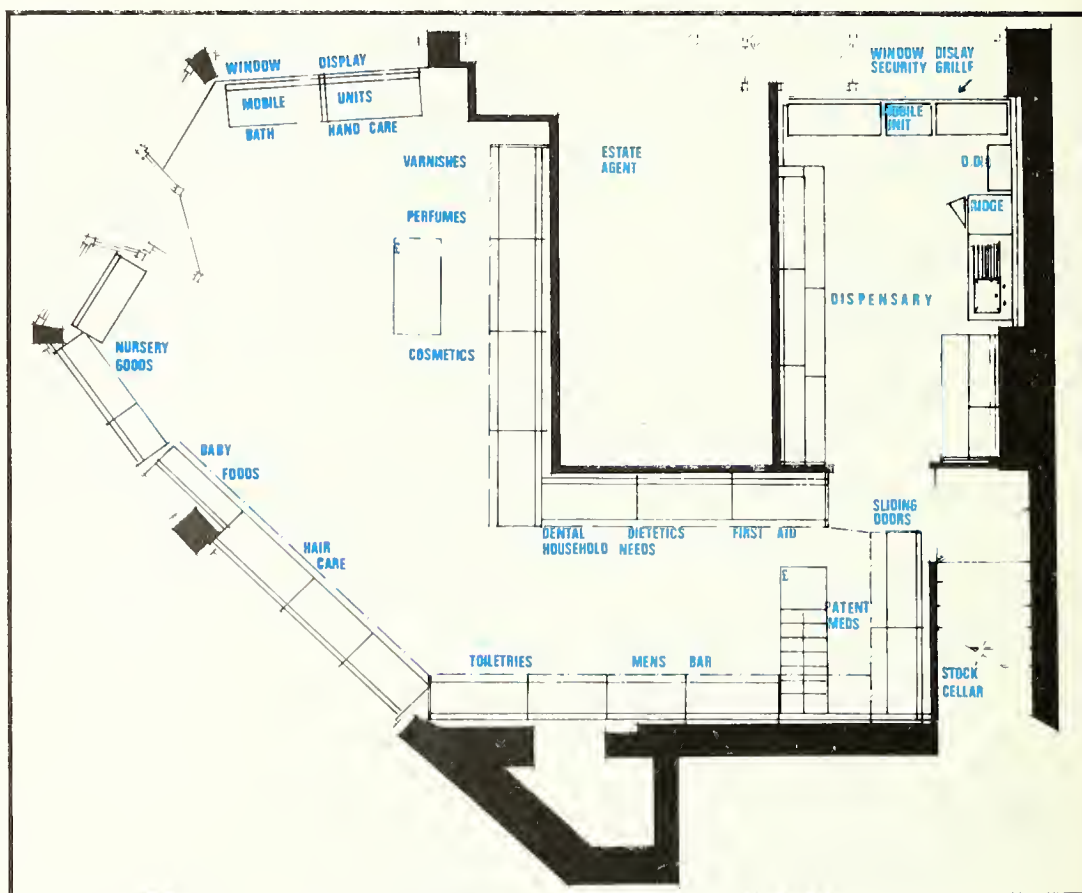
Getting round an estate agent

What can be done to refit a pharmacy with an estate agent in the middle of the shop? That problem faced Mr Richard Dawe, managing director of R. J. Dawe Ltd, in his company's newest acquisition, Gees Pharmacy, Kew, Surrey.

The shop was purchased in November 1977 as an existing pharmacy and scratched on the exterior window is "27th May 1896", believed to be authentic. The entire parade is subject to a preservation order.

The pharmacy is on a corner site and because the estate agent refused to move, the pharmacy was re-modelled around it at a cost of £10,000 by Storeplan Ltd. False ceilings, plumbing, a security grill, closed circuit television camera, carpet tiles, and the fittings were included.

A new layout was designed with no major alterations except the removal of one structural wall. The first stage involved tidying up the front section of the shop, to provide more space for "shopping the shop". A counter in the centre was removed, and new back panels placed around the shop, in orange and yellow. The back panels to the perfume and cosmetic display are a dark brown suede finish, with mirrored-glass behind the nail varnishes, providing a "luxury" look to the section which can be viewed from the front door. Window displays have been built on one side to



increase attraction to passing trade.

The main alteration was the re-positioning of the dispensary, which previously occupied a central section with access from two entrances. By closing off one entrance, the dispensary has been built at the rear allowing customer traffic

to flow through the entire shop and effectively, increase the sales area. By installing two cash counters, complete security for the entire shop has been provided, Storeplan say. Although too early to gauge a turnover increase Mr Dawe believes the modernisation has scored a hit.

Before and after views of Gees Pharmacy allowing customer flow throughout. Above is the new floor plan



Window competition for Shopex International

Shopex International and the Shop and Display Equipment Association are jointly sponsoring a national shop window and display competition. Entries will be judged prior to the Shopex International '79 exhibition, in Birmingham from June 3-7. The competition has a general theme to allow a free hand in style. The winner will receive a trophy, £100, and a certificate. All entrants will

be given a window sticker publicising their involvement.

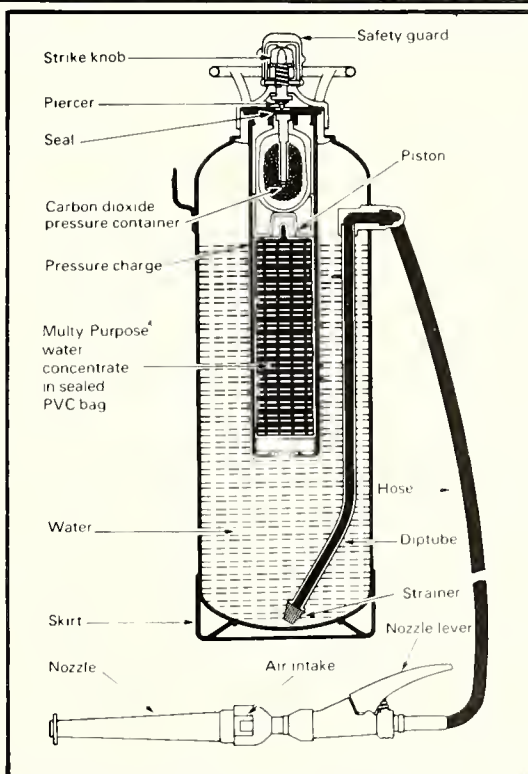
Westbourne Exhibitions Ltd, organisers of Shopex, are to create a register of potential UK selling agents for overseas exhibitors. Applications from UK companies who wish to be considered for inclusion in the register should be sent to the organisers. *Westbourne Exhibitions Ltd, Crown House, Morden, Surrey, SM4 5EB.*

Multy extinguisher

The Multy-Purpose water based fire extinguisher model 7000 supersedes the Nu-Swift air foam 1450, and is said to be more efficient on fires involving flammable liquids and liquifiable solids (except those miscible with water or which contain water-miscible solvents). The new extinguisher is also effective against fires involving carbonaceous materials such as wood, paper, textile-fabrics, etc. The extinguisher contains 9.4 litres of water and 0.6 litres of concentrate in a PVC bag. On operation the resultant foam solution is expelled by carbon dioxide. *Nu-Swift International Ltd, Elland, West Yorks.*

Fire-resisting box

Supalux is an asbestos-free fire-resisting board being used as lining material for letter boxes. Shown below is a box by Fox Brothers Ltd, Bradford, where the fire-resisting lining is supported by a timber framework. An anti-theft chute is also made from Supalux. Dimensional stability and resistance to mould and insect attack in damp conditions are features claimed of Supalux boards which are available with a natural or sanded finish in a range of sizes and thicknesses. *Cape Boards and Panels Ltd, Iver Lane, Uxbridge UB8 25Q.*



Display brochure

"If you've got it, we'll flaunt it", a brochure from Apton Ltd, outlines the range of display systems offered by the company. Examples of the Speedframe square tube, Kralex round tube and Solon Cantilever shelving systems are illustrated. *Apton Ltd, Empire Way, Middlesex HA9 0JW.*

Ferranti enter CCTV systems

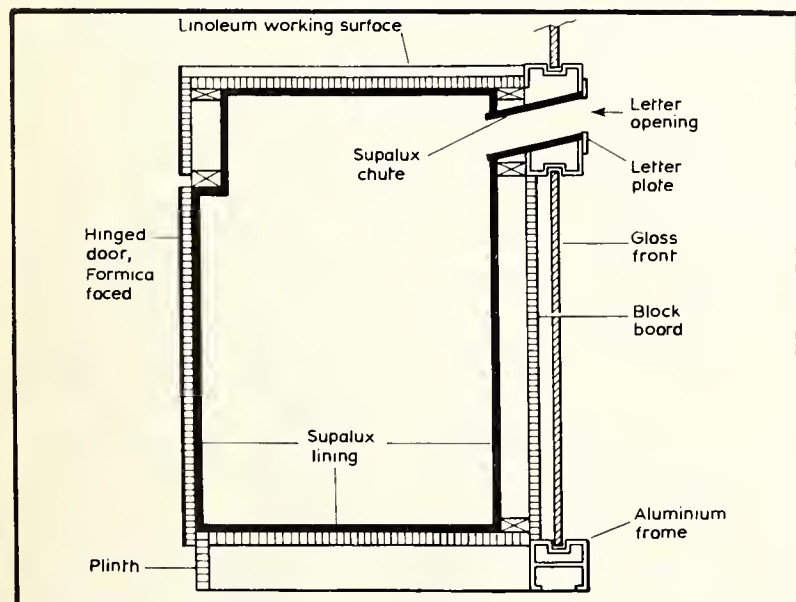
Ferranti Instrumentation Ltd have entered the field of closed circuit television with the Ferranti surveillance system. The company will manufacture and market large scale surveillance systems, designed for industrial and retail sites needing multi-camera security and incorporating movement detectors, motorised zoom and low light lenses, and recording facilities. Ferranti say they can also meet the needs of smaller customers and a free consultancy and demonstration service will be available to all potential customers. The systems will be installed and serviced on a regional basis. *Ferranti Instrumentation Ltd, St Mary's Road, Moston, Manchester.*

Light 'N Lacy

Greton Displays have introduced six new colours to their Light 'N Lacy decorette range. The new colours are: Cherry blossom, chestnut, pimpernel, fern, bluebell, and marigold. Samples are available. *Greton Displays Ltd, 214 Maybank Road, South Woodford, London E18 1EX.*

Coating for walls

A fungistatic membrane coating is available from Liquid Plastics Ltd for use in "sterile rooms." Supplied as soft, water-based paste, Steridex can be applied by brush. It cures to form an elastic membrane which stretches to accommodate thermal and structural movement of the substrate without rupturing. Steridex allows the substrate to "breathe" naturally but is totally impervious to water. The treated surface is highly resistant to most water-based chemicals, detergents, diluted acids and alkalis. It is available in nine colours, black and white. *Liquid Plastics Ltd, PO Box 7, London Road, Preston PR1 4AJ.*



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COMPANY NEWS

Diversification of interests good for Guinness

The pharmaceutical retailing and wholesaling element of Arthur Guinness Son & Co accounted for £1.4 million profit last year. Record trading results emphasise the group's wisdom in diversification; all its non-brewing activities—32 per cent of record group profits of £44.9m—show substantial growth. Largest of those operations is the general trading division which has raised £8.4m profits, an increase of £2.1m, and takes in R. Gordon Drummond's 146 pharmacies throughout Britain. Guinness also has a 51 per cent stake along with Knoll of West Germany in Twyford Pharmaceutical Services to manufacture and market anti-coagulants.

Mr Tony Pursell, Guinness managing director, foresees non-brewing operations contributing 40 per cent of group profit, and growing faster than the brewing side of the business. Group sales rose by 29 per cent to a peak £642m, with total profit up by 13.7 per cent. Guinness is encouraged by initial response to its new pharmacies and during the coming months has plans to open further large stores selling stationery, toiletries, cosmetics, photographic goods, and records as well as pharmaceuticals.

A health division for Booker

Booker McConnell's interests in health foods, dietary supplements and pharmaceuticals are to be grouped into a newly-formed health products trading division from January 1, 1979. These businesses at present form part of the Booker McConnell food distribution division but their developing size, and their specialist and international nature, now necessitate separate organisation. The members of the board of the division will be Mr R. A. McKenzie (chairman), Mr W. A. Simpson, Mr Milton Okin (USA), Mr A. J. Grant.

Mr McKenzie will continue as chairman of Booker Health Foods and American Dietetics, Mr Simpson as chairman of Booker Pharmaceuticals, Mr Milton Okin as president of American Dietetics and Mr Grant as finance director of Booker Health Foods.

Wilkinson results

The personal products category, Wilkinson Match Ltd, had another difficult half-year with margins under severe pressure. This was due to increased competitive activity in shaving aid investments in new product areas. Pre-tax profits in this category in the six months to September 30, were £565,000 compared with £1,111,000 in the same period last year. Turnover was £21.556m (£22.68m). The company expects personal

products to be under pressure for the immediate future. Pre-tax profits of the group as a whole increased by 28.3 per cent to £9.266m with turnover at £132.153m compared with £93.673m in the same period of 1977.

LRC profit falls

Pre-tax profit of LRC International has fallen from £4.13 million to £3.32m in the first half-year to September 30. Pre-tax profit for the whole of last year had been £6.67m. The directors report that trading conditions in the UK were not so good in the first quarter of the year but showed improvement in the second, and this trend is continuing. Company activities in Europe and in the US continue to perform well. Sales were ahead from £46.66m to £48.38m in the first half.

Briefly

Dendron Ltd are no longer responsible for the sales and distribution of Herbisimo splash cologne on behalf of Dana Perfumes Ltd. Dana will be handling the sales and distribution themselves from January, 1979.

APPOINTMENTS

Vestric Ltd: Mr J. P. Baseley, operations controller of Vestric Ltd south western division, becomes operations controller of the company's southern division on January 1, 1979. He succeeds Mr D. L. Taylor, who becomes marketing director. Mr Baseley's successor at south western division is Mr R. C. Thomas, branch manager, midland distribution centre.

Mr C. D. Bell, formerly marketing manager, has been appointed customer systems controller. Mr R. Crowther, branch accountant, Leeds branch, has been appointed assistant branch manager, Middlesbrough. Mr A. Steele, assistant branch manager, Stockport, has been appointed acting branch manager owing to the indisposition of Mr R. Reed, branch manager. Mr D. Houlgreave has been appointed acting assistant branch manager, Stockport. Mr C. Morgan has been appointed assistant branch manager at Vestric (Rowland James) branch, Swansea. Mr R. Taylor has been appointed assistant branch manager at Brislington, Bristol. Mr C. Walker has been appointed assistant branch manager, Preston.

Mr I. M. Archibald, Vantage Systems executive at head office, Runcorn, has been appointed branch manager, Foots Cray. Mr D. Cruickshank, branch manager, Sandwich, has been appointed manager, Hull. Mr D. J. Kern, branch manager, Hull, has been appointed manager at midlands distribution centre, Kingswinford, succeeding Mr R. C. Thomas (above). Mr J. C. Wood, depot manager at Carlisle, has been appointed branch manager, Sandwich. Mr G. Graham, depot supervisor, Carlisle, has been promoted depot manager, Carlisle. These appointments are also effective from January 1, 1979.

MARKET NEWS

Crude drugs slip

London, December 20: The pre-Christmas week is traditionally quiet in the market for commodities covered by this report and this year has proved no exception.

There has been a slight downward drift among crude drug quotations due to the weaker dollar and the desire of some holders to do business. Among the items affected were Canada balsam, cherry bark, senega and witchhazel leaves. Ipecacuanha is in short supply and hydrastis has suddenly become difficult to find for prompt delivery.

Pharmaceutical chemical prices are steady at previous levels, the only exception during the week being phenylephrine hydrochloride (up £9 kg). The new year is expected to herald in a further number of increases in this sector.

Pharmaceutical chemicals

Acetic acid: 4-ton lots, per metric ton delivered—glacial BPC £274, 99.5 per cent £261.50; 80 per cent grade pure £240.50; technical £224.50.
Benzoic acid: BP in 500-kg lots, £0.7426 kg.
Boric acid: EP grade per metric ton in 2-4 ton lots—granular £351; powder £375.
Citric acid: BP per metric ton single deliveries, granular hydrous £739; anhydrous £794; five-ton contracts £735 and £790 respectively, Crystalline £171.17 and £170.17 respectively.
Formic acid: per metric ton delivered in 4-ton lots, 98 per cent £307.50; 85 per cent £253.
Hypophosphorous acid: (Per metric ton in 50-kg lots). Pure 50 per cent £389.17. BPC (30 per cent) £305.34.
Mercury: BPC redistilled £7.10 kg in kg lots.
Mersalyl: Acid £35.07 kg in 10-kg lots.
Phenylephrine hydrochloride: From £80 kg according to quality.

Crude drugs

Aloes: Cape £900 ton spot; £870, cif. Curacao £1,990 nominal, cif.
Balsams: (kg) **Canada:** Easier at £13.55 spot; £13, cif. **Copaiba:** No spot; £2.50, cif. **Peru:** £9 spot nominal, £8.95 cif. **Tolu:** £5.50 spot.
Buchu: Leaves £1.35 kg spot; £1.25, cif, new crop.
Cascara: £950 metric ton spot; £930, cif.
Cherry bark: £1,170 metric ton spot; £1,130 cif.
Dandelion: Spot £1,770 metric ton spot; £1,740, cif.
Ginger: Cochin £900 metric ton, spot; £690, new crop £690 (Jan-Feb). Other sources not quoted.
Henbane: Niger £1,650 metric ton spot; £1,600, cif.
Hydrastis: Spot £14 kg; forward £14, cif both nominal.
Ipecacuanha: (kg) Costa Rican, Spot £10.30 kg, nominal; no cif.
Lemon peel: Unextracted £1,120, metric ton spot; shipment £1,080, cif.
Menthol: (kg) Brazilian £7.15 spot; £7.20, cif Chinese £7.50 duty paid; £6.15 cif.
Quillaia: Spot £1,180 metric ton; £870, cif. Jan-Feb.
Senega: Canadian £9.90 kg spot; £9.60, cif.
Valerian: Dutch £1,680 metric ton spot new crop £1,640, cif; Indian £1,030; £990 cif.
Witchhazel leaves: £2.40 kg spot £2.20, cif.

Essential and expressed oils

Anise: (kg) Spot £14.70; shipment £15, cif.
Cade: Spanish £1.25 kg.
Camphor white: £0.87 kg spot; £0.82, cif.
Cananga: Indonesia £16 kg spot; £15.25, cif.
Caraway: Imported £20 kg spot.
Cardamom: English-distilled £290 kg.
Cassia: Spot £36.50 kg; shipment £35.50, cif, English distilled from bark £160.
Cedarwood: Chinese no spot £1.20, cif.
Cinnamon: Ceylon leaf £2.50, kg spot; £2.35, cif. Bark, English-distilled £150.
Citronella: Ceylon £1.60 kg spot; £1.70, cif, Chinese £2.45 spot; £2.50, cif.
Clove: Indonesian leaf, £2.65 kg spot; £2.60 cif; **Coriander:** Russian about £20 kg.
Peppermint: (kg) Arvensis—Brazilian £3.85 spot; £3.80, cif; Chinese £3.80 spot and Piperata American from £11 spot; £10.30, cif.
Rosemary: £6 kg spot.
Sandalwood: Mysore £75 kg. East Indian £65.
Sassafras: Brazilian £2 kg spot; £1.75, cif.
Spearmint: (g) American £6.50 spot, £6, cif. Chinese £11.25 spot; £10.90, cif.
Thyme: Red 45/50% £15 kg.

The prices given are those obtained by importers or manufacturers for bulk quantities and do not include value added tax. They represent the last quoted or accepted prices as we go to press.

Review of the 1978 markets

Prices of pharmaceutical chemicals during 1978 maintained the stability of the previous year when the slowdown in the United Kingdom inflation rate was first noticeable. The value of the pound sterling firmed considerably against the weak US dollar which helped to keep import prices down. But against the stronger of the European currencies the pound lost more ground making chemicals from producing countries dearer.

There was a surplus of production in a number of countries overseas and this helped to stimulate competition for British producers. At times, however, items such as certain sulphonamide derivatives when imported were dearer than the home-produced.

Shortages of a number of chemicals were highlighted, in particular cocaine was so short that the Department of Health issued a statement during September which emphasised the need for conserving stocks and suggested pharmacists should discuss with their clinical colleagues ways to reserve existing stocks for essential use. First signs of the shortage came in June when the makers sharply advanced their schedules. The alkaloid rose to £575/kg from £494—16 months previously it could have been purchased for £448. By August 1978 the advanced schedules were withdrawn.

Sulphonamides shortage

Also short were a number of sulphonamide derivatives; from late summer onwards their prices began to escalate. Imported sulphathiazole was around £7.60/kg in September against £3.50 two months previously. Sulphadimidine rose to £7.42 from £5.20. Sales of cantharidin ceased earlier in the year when manufacturers were unable to purchase supplies of cantharides. At the close of the year they were still unable to obtain stocks from the usual producing countries.

Most of the important vitamins rose in April and again in July. In the last quarter of the year nicotinic acid and nicotinamide were also advanced while supplies of folic acid had by that time become somewhat scarce. There was considerable competition for British makers to meet from China and East European countries for the bigger-selling vitamins such as ascorbic acid.

Iodides rose twice (in April and December) while barbiturates, with the exception of phenobarbitone, were increased in April and November.

Any price reduction in a period of 8-10 per cent inflation is newsworthy so it was a change to record a considerable fall in the price of bismuth salts on two occasions. Bismuth carbonate now at £6.25/kg compares with £10.46 a year ago.

Pharmaceutical chemicals (£ per kg)

	December 1977	December 1978
Ascorbic acid	6.94	5.70
Aspirin	1.31	1.40
Bismuth carbonate	10.46	6.25
Citric acid	0.74	0.74
Codeine phosphate	490.00	490.00
Paracetamol	3.00	3.00
Phenobarbitone	11.62	11.62
Potassium citrate	0.89	0.89
Sodium bicarbonate	0.09	0.10

Crude drugs (£ per kg)

Canada balsam	11.30	13.65
Cascara	0.99	0.93
Cloves	3.80	4.30
Ginger, Cochin	1.12	0.90
Ipecacuanha	10.00	10.00*
Kola nuts	0.42	0.50
Menthol, Brazilian	9.30	7.15
Chinese	10.00	7.50
Senna alex hp pods	2.50	2.30*
Witchhazel leaves	2.70	2.40

Essential oils (£ per kg)

Anise, China star	14.50	14.70
Citronella, Ceylon	1.32	1.60
Eucalyptus, Chinese 80/85	2.05	1.90
Lemongrass	5.20	5.00
Peppermint, Brazilian	4.80	3.85
Chinese	4.75	3.80
American	22.00	11.00
Sandalwood, Mysore	60.00	75.00
Spearmint, American	15.00	6.50
Chinese	13.00	11.25

* Nominal

Crude drugs

From the accompanying table the recorded prices for December 1977 and 1978 often belie the considerable movements during the intervening months. Ipecacuanha, for instance, is now very scarce on the spot (the recent trouble in Nicaragua has a bearing on this), whereas in 1977 it was freely available.

Menthol attracted much attention for a greater part of the year. This was brought about by origins slashing their prices. Chinese material which started at £10/kg ended at £7.50 and Brazilian, which held on to a premium during the first half, finally gave way finishing around £7.15/kg—a full of £2.15.

American botanicals were firm for most of the time. There was a break in May and the fall in the dollar helped to ease the situation further. Trading in spices was subdued for the most part. There was the occasional flurry in pepper—always a speculative commodity. India cut off exports of turmeric root causing something of a panic among dealers in some Far Eastern countries. Ginger was short during the whole year and for most of the time only the Cochin variety was offered. Hand-picked Alexandria senna pods were scarce on the spot. Tinnevely crops did little to relieve the shortage.

Essential oils

In the essential oil market it was peppermint that provided the main topic of discussion. As with menthol the *arvensis* oil was a falling market during most of the year and, contrary

to the usual practice in a falling situation, buyers were interested. London merchants and brokers at one period were writing business with their overseas customers from their home during the night and over the weekend.

A surprise was the big crop of US peppermint as was the extent of the fall in the price of the oil (piperata). The same was true of spearmint oil; China did not react to the new American prices with the result that Chinese oil was quoted at £11.25/kg and American at £6.50. Citronella and lemongrass were firm for most of the time. Mysore sandalwood which saw-sawed as usual and ended up at £75/kg a gain of £15 on the year. Bergamot was very scarce towards the end of the year. Indications were that the new crop prices would be double those of a year ago.

COMING EVENTS

Thursday, January 4

Hounslow Branch Pharmaceutical Society, lecture theatre, West Middlesex Hospital, Twickenham Road, Isleworth, at 8 pm. Dr D. Bailey (Welsh School of Pharmacy) on "The drug alcohol".
Society of Cosmetic Chemists, Royal Society of Arts, 6 John Adam Street, London WC2, at 7 pm. Mr L. R. Chislett (Honeywell-Atlas Ltd) on "Nonionic surfactants for cosmetics".

Friday, January 5

Pharmaceutical Marketing Club, London Room, New London Centre, Parker Street, Drury Lane, London WC2 at 11.45 am. Annual meeting. Luncheon (£6.75 per head) 1.00 pm. Further information from Mrs J. M. Hicks, PM Club, Henderson Group One, 1 Roberts Mews, Lowndes Place, London SW1

Advance information

Labex International '79: Laboratory, diagnostics and medical instrumentation exhibition, National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, March 12-16. Organisers, Industrial and Trade Fairs Ltd, Radcliffe House, Blenheim Court, Solihull, West Midlands B91 2BG.

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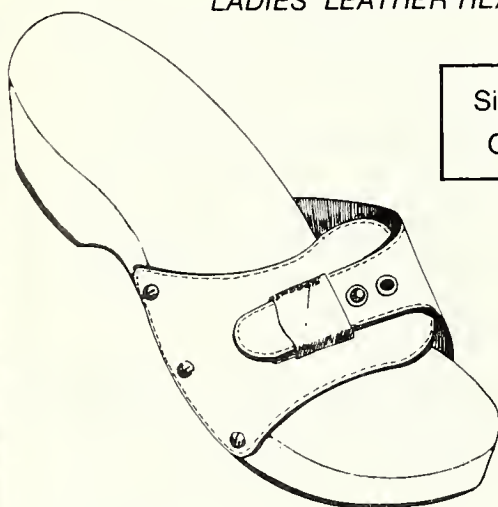
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